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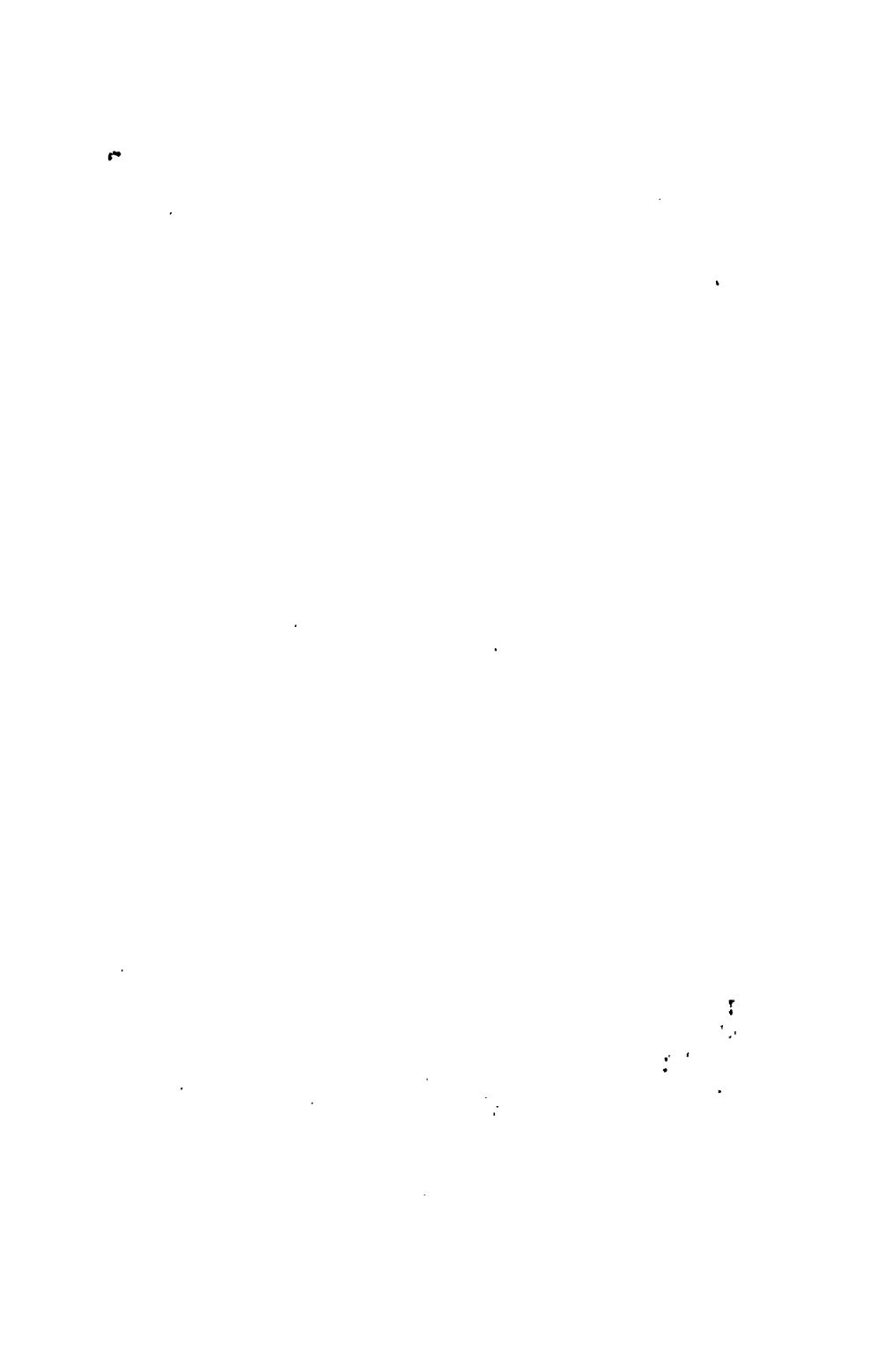
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ON THE
SPORTS AND PURSUITS
OF
THE ENGLISH.



ON THE

SPORTS AND PURSUITS

OF

THE ENGLISH,

AS BEARING UPON THEIR NATIONAL CHARACTER.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF WILTON,

P.C., G.C.H., D.C.L., ETC.

Thos. Smith



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TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

EDWARD, EARL OF DERBY,

WHOSE ATTACHMENT TO EVERY MANLY PURSUIT,

AND

THOROUGHLY ENGLISH CHARACTER,

HAVE ENDEARED HIM TO ALL,

THIS WORK

Is Gratefully Inscribed,

BY

HIS SINCERE FRIEND AND RELATIVE

WILTON.



P R E F A C E.

IT had often occurred to me upon observing the difference that existed in the characters of the English and Continental nations, that there must be some cause for this, not so much perhaps in the people themselves as in those habits and pursuits which in early times formed the basis of their national idiosyncrasy, and hence in my leisure hours I prepared a paper upon the subject of the "Sports and Pursuits of the English, as bearing upon their National Character," which I intended to have read at the last meeting of the British Association held at Manchester; but which circumstances prevented my doing. Subsequently it was suggested to me to carry out this idea more fully; the subject however expanded so much, when I came to consider the effects produced by our

sports and pursuits, not only upon our national character, but upon our *personal freedom*, that I felt myself obliged to call in the aid of a friend to assist me in substantiating these views from the records of the past. To him I must here express my obligation for the great assistance he has rendered me.

I hope that this little work will be received in the same spirit in which it has been written, as taking a somewhat novel view of the past history of this country, and contrasting it with that of the nations of the Continent, and thus proving, what seems to me to be really the case, that the inherent love of sport and manly pursuits, so conspicuous among the inhabitants of these islands, is indeed the foundation of the glorious liberty we now enjoy.

WILTON.

7, Grosvenor Square.





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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

IF we look around us, and survey our own island home, we find a land neither of the olive nor of the vine, in extent limited, the climate variable, the soil grateful only with hard toil. Yet in the absence of any natural advantages, it is a country of which the inhabitants may well be proud. And what are its chief elements? A Constitution which asserts and insures the freedom of the people; the free exercise of thought and speech in religion and politics; social and scientific progress; personal liberty; the impartial administration of justice. These are the main elements of which it is composed; and they are the emblems of a great nation.

If, then, without any natural advantages, we have reached this proud pre-eminence, to what must we attribute this high standard of excellence? I assert, to the character of the people. And what are the chief points of this character? Indomitable courage, unshaken constancy, perseverance under difficulties, mutual confidence, a spirit of truth generally pervading all ranks of life, religion asserting its benign influence, sacred authority the basis of all action ; and, let it never be forgotten, that, wherever an Englishman is, freedom is his watchword, his aim, and his boast. On the other hand, we have been stigmatized as gluttonous, wine-bibbers, gamblers, speculators, hypocrites. Admitting some truth in what is thus launched at us, I think it may be granted that, taken as a whole, the Briton is not the worst specimen of the human race ; at all events, we aim at a high standard nationally, and if it is not quite reached, this much must be conceded, that at least we have not failed altogether.

My object in this work is to show that while our historians have traced our national character through the vast and varied range of politics, our sports and pastimes also have been, and still

are material elements in the formation of that national character now concentrated in the honoured name and person of Englishman. The early history of this country presents to us the Roman subduing and domineering over the original Briton. On his retirement, the once hardy and enduring native, enervated by subjection, fell helpless before the invading Saxon. These two peoples, after many struggles and difficulties, settled quietly on the soil, and, with the Danes, at length formed a nation consisting of two or more races, whose chief points of character consisted in strong self-reliance, bluntness of mind and manner, and a love of truth. In the eleventh century the Norman rushed in, and for a while crushed all popular demonstration. But the Anglo-Saxon element asserted its influence, and with certain modifications has even to the present time maintained its pristine form and vigour.

It is natural to expect that each of the dominant races in succession would have left some trace of their sports behind them. The Romans were strongly addicted to sports and pastimes. They revelled in chariot and horse

aces; they strove in wrestling; boxing was a popular amusement. They were fond also of quoit playing, foot races, and other gymnastic exercises. But it must be remembered that whatever they introduced was for themselves alone. Their sports were confined to their own soldiery. The people among whom they lived as conquerors were not allowed to join, so that no Roman custom struck any deep root in the soil. The occupation was military. The conquerors lived principally in their camps, and mixed but little with the conquered race. But even during this period the natives showed courage and hardihood in their sports. They were fond of the rude joys of the chase; hunting was a sport as well as a necessity, for upon it depended partly their supply of food. Hawking also was one of the pastimes of the period. And as the Romans did not interfere harshly with the people, they were left to occupy themselves after their own fashion.

The Anglo-Saxons were a hardy and adventurous race. As rovers over the sea, the excitement and peril of their life formed in a manner its charm. Fearless on their native

element, undaunted amidst dangers, as soon as the rover settled upon his island home he brought these qualities to bear upon his pursuits, hence the manly character of his pastimes. The Roman had lived chiefly in camps; the Saxon loved life in its rural aspect; he preferred the wildness and isolation of a country residence, a preference which exists amongst the people even to this day, and forms indeed the very marked contrast between the Englishman and the native of any continental state. The Danes, who may be considered a branch of the Anglo-Saxon race, partook in a great degree of the same character—they were bold and adventurous, hardy and daring, sea rovers and pirates, and during the time of their rule they introduced many customs which still exist. It is to them that the formidable weapon the battle-axe owes its use, to them also the bow has been referred, and it is said that the skill displayed by the English in this implement of war was in the first instance derived from the Danes. In an article in a late number of the “Westminster Review,” the writer thus traces the intimate connexion and infusion of the Danish race. “For with the Danes,” he says,

“even more closely than with the Germans is the great English nation allied ; our devotion to freedom, our genius for empire and colonization, our spirit of maritime adventure and exploration, seem to refer us for their immediate source to the old Scandinavian heroes, the discoverers of Iceland, the settlers of Greenland, the predecessors of Columbus in America, the loyal life-guardsmen of Constantinople, the besiegers of Paris, the impropiators of Normandy under Rolf, the ‘Sea Horse,’ the renowned forefather of that terrible ‘splendour of God,’ who in due time conquered from the ill-starred Saxons our beautiful England, the mythical paradise of his ancestors, and who by that final act of conquest rendered it for ever unconquerable !”

Under the Normans two elements were introduced which for a long time had a marked influence upon the nation—the feudal principle and chivalry ; the first affecting the political character, the latter bearing upon the manners of the country. With these were brought into the island the very marked distinction which divided the inhabitants into two distinct castes—the aristocracy and the people. This produced a

strong line of demarcation in their several sports. The nobles confined themselves chiefly to jousts and tournaments, to which none but knights were admitted. They were also passionately fond of hunting, hawking, and the chase generally. The lower orders were only permitted to join in these either as accessories or merely as spectators. They were allowed, it is true, the privilege of practising archery, quarter-staff, and other athletic exercises which were well adapted to make them hardy and self-reliant. But there was no communion between the two classes, the nobles looking down with contempt upon their serfs and retainers, who returned the scorn with fear and hatred. When the feudal principle declined, and the spirit of chivalry died away, the sports which characterized them also disappeared. But during this period there were other pastimes which, while they amused, seemed also necessary to fill up the gaps of time among people ignorant of reading, and really without any mental resource whatever. I allude to the constant attendance of gleemen and minnesingers, jugglers and mimes, at the residences of the feudal aristocracy. These helped to while away hours

which would otherwise have hung heavily on the hands of these scions of noble birth. The writer of the article quoted before thus happily illustrates these ages of chivalry. "It is not difficult to conjecture what were the pastimes and occupations of those far-off days. Song and tale were held in esteem, the harp was played both by man and woman, dice rattled on the board, and fast young ladies seemingly up to everything from literal pitch-and-toss to metaphorical manslaughter, lost their hearts and other valuables during fascinating games of chess, in which these reckless gamesters played for none but the highest stakes, their own peerless beauty and priceless love. Of course they always played the losing game. Below, the castle guard rang with the knightly exercise, and the green-sward was merry with the dance. A characteristic incident in these ballads (the ancient Danish ones) was the perpetual ascension up the high bower stairs, and as in some of them the scrape of the violin is heard, we are almost inevitably reminded of the once popular ditty, 'Such a getting up stairs and a playing of the fiddle.' Of the viands consumed in those old days we

can say but little. We hear of roast and boiled in general, of fish, beef, fitches of bacon, porridge, loaves of bread. The goblet of wine is for ever circulating, the luscious mead is at the stranger's service, and the sparkling ale is to be had for the asking."

During the Plantagenet period, out-door amusements generally found favour with the people. The joust and tournament were still the pastime of the nobility, while archery continued to be the popular exercise, and to the skill of the English bowmen it was owing that victory so often declared on their side. In Edward III.'s reign archery was greatly encouraged; indeed it was ordered to be especially practised on holidays. In the Wars of the Roses many a hard-fought battle-field attested the skill and bravery of the English archer, and the ordinary range to the butts clearly showed that a strong arm as well as a steady eye were required for even the ordinary practice, as the people were not allowed to shoot at a mark under two hundred and twenty yards, and the cross-bow, as a weapon of offence, was made to send a quarrel or bolt a distance of forty rods.

As may be imagined, maritime affairs must at an early period have occupied the attention of the inhabitants of an island; but the vessels of that day were rudely built, and so small that, at the siege of Calais in 1346, the number of seamen in each was only twenty, and the voyages were principally confined to the coast. When, however, about the fourteenth century, the compass was discovered, navigation became at once enlarged in its sphere, and the sailors more daring and bold. Three great events, moreover, which happened at the close of the fifteenth century, produced a very marked effect upon the spirit of maritime adventure. These were the discovery of the West Indies, and a few years after of the Continent of America, while about the same time the passage was made round the Cape of Good Hope. The extension of commerce resulting from the opening of new sources of trade would necessarily produce a love for a seafaring life, especially among the population along the coast, and the sea thus became more thoroughly an occupation. But though England may boast now its fleet of vessels of all kinds, it was not in the van in those days. The Spanish and Portuguese were the

first who may be said to have monopolized the dominion over the ocean ; and the daring spirit of commerce had so elevated the heavy Dutchman that he was able for some time to dispute with the English the command even of the Channel itself. These nations now have all sunk into insignificance as maritime powers, while the English from small beginnings have achieved the supremacy. The Spaniard has been humbled ; the Portuguese have been reduced ; the Dutch are no longer feared. We alone have kept up the prestige of nautical superiority, not only as a great naval power, but as a great commercial nation, covering the seas with vessels laden with all the riches collected from the uttermost parts of the earth. This spirit of maritime enterprise has had the effect of making the sea not only an occupation, but also an amusement. Among no other people in the world can such a spectacle be exhibited as may be yearly seen in the yachting season. The waters that wash our shores then bear on their bosom a fleet of vessels, models indeed of beauty, now floating leisurely at anchor, now testing the measure of speed in the struggle for victory.

But their voyages are not confined to our own shores. Everywhere may the British bunting be seen proudly waving in the breeze. The home-built yachts cover the blue waters of the Mediterranean ; their prows plough the Atlantic. The far-off Cape of Good Hope, and the still further Australian continent, receive them with welcome. Nor are they unknown among the many islands that thickly dot the vast Pacific.

During the Commonwealth a change came over the land. Many of those pursuits which had not only been countenanced, but held in high esteem, gradually gave way before the narrowing views of the Puritans. Hume* relates " that all the recreations were in a manner suspended by the rigid severity of the Presbyterians and Independents. Horse-races and cock-matches were prohibited as the greatest enormities, even bear-baiting was esteemed heathenish and un-Christian. The sport of it, not the inhumanity, gave the offence." The invention of gunpowder had, however, ere this, altered the character of some of the sports. The introduction of firearms led to the disuse of the bow, the once famous weapon of

* Vol. vii. p. 332.

the English yeoman, and also of the cross-bow. Rude and clumsy though the guns were at first, their power was greater for offence, as they improved their superiority was felt and acknowledged. Strutt, quoting a previous author, gives the following curious list of the names of the weapons at this time in use :—" In the beginning of the seventeenth century the word artillery was used in a much more extensive sense, and comprehended long-bows, cross-bows, slur-bows, and stone-bows, also scorpions, rams, and catapults, which the writer tells were formerly used. He then names the firearms as follows: cannons, basilisks, culverins, jakers, faulcons, minions, fowlers, chambers, harquebusses, calivers, petronels, pistols, and dags."

In the sixteenth century, horse-racing would appear to have commenced as a regular diversion, and being then carried on without gambling, was not objected to even by the rigid Puritans, who strongly inveighed against the other sports of the times. Bear-baiting and bull-baiting were popular with the multitude; even Elizabeth herself was enthusiastic in her admiration of these demoralizing and debasing sports. Mysteries and

interludes were played on the village green and in the market-places ; and before the close of the century the regular drama had its origin. On the Sunday evenings foot-ball, hand-ball, and a variety of other amusements were allowed and approved of by a large portion of the clergy, but they met with the uncompromising opposition of the Puritans.

At the Restoration a change came over the manners of the country. The people, released from the strong chains imposed by religious fanaticism, broke loose from all restraint ; and liberty too soon, alas ! degenerated into licence. But still the sports of the day were of a manly character. Boat-racing became a favourite exercise, and many trials of skill and strength were exhibited on the "silent highway." Sailing also in decked vessels for sport and pastime seems to have allured many. Skating was a popular amusement, after the "manner of Holland," as it was termed ; and the game of bowls formed a diversion not only for the male sex, but courtly ladies might be seen entering with spirit into the recreation afforded on the bowling-green.

The eighteenth century was a period certainly

not favourable to the growth of manly sport. The vices which crept into the Court at the Restoration found their way through the various grades of society, and gambling, with its usual concomitants, became a fashionable failing. Many conceits and puerilities were also mixed up with every-day life. "It is curious to see," says a writer,* giving a picture of the time, "how much importance was attached in those days to forms and ceremonies—to the mode of address, to the number of dishes at dinner, to the degree of a curtsy, to the order of precedence, to the dictates of fashion. To be in fashion was the grand necessity of the times ; to follow the fashion the whole duty of man. All this looks very contemptible at first sight, but let us regard it a little closer. In the previous century there had been no such thing as society, properly so called. There was a crowd of people about the Courts of the Stuarts, but it was rather a coterie than a society. It was an inner ring which few could break into. Gradually this ring widened as commerce grew, luxury increased, and the power of Parliament became recognised. The country

* *St. James's Chronicle.*

gentlemen flocked to London, and with their wives and families broke into the circle of the Court. It had been their wont to live in the country in solitary insignificance. They now sought the town, and formed themselves into a society—a national society, with the Court for its centre, and with an introduction at Court as the ceremony of installation. But it was natural that the flower of the nation thus entering upon a new life, the very essence of which was sociability, should pay unusual deference to the customs of society. When the gentry crowded from the solitude of the country, where every one had been nursing his little peculiarities, and coddling every whim, to taste the joys of social converse, it was a prime necessity of their position that they should forego their local habits—very much also their individual tastes—in order to adapt themselves to the habits and tastes of the wider society they aspired to join. It was a prime necessity of people thus suddenly adopted into society, that the first of all questions should be, not what is right or what is proper, but what is fashionable—that the most important study in their eyes should be to study the arts of society, the

art of conversation, the art of dress, the art of deportment, the art of letter-writing, the art of amusement."

During the present century a great change has been made, there has been a reaction to the manly sports of England's earlier days ; the Englishman now shows himself an apt disciple in all pastimes. Hunting and shooting have their votaries ; fishing carries off many captives to its indulgence ; both men and boys contend in the manly game of cricket ; yachting is peculiarly national, and is especially attractive ; boat-racing allures many by the excitement it creates. Even archery has charms for both sexes ; and it is important to observe that the principal amusements are those which bring together people of all grades, and thus for the time break down all class barriers. The landlord meets his tenant by the covert's side ; the cricket-field knows no distinction of persons ; and the glories of a Derby-day point to a reign of such universal freedom, such jostlings of high and low, such social mixtures, as could be found in no other country of the world.

Such things are unknown on the Continent.

Our youth are early taught in their sports to aim at manly independence of character. The English boys really do play, while those of the Continent know no games. There the dull routine of school is enlivened by no merry shouts. The playground to them affords no pastime—all is rule and regulation, drill and dress. “Even the education of children is brought under the control of the State, instead of being regulated by the judgment of masters and parents; and the whole plan is executed with such energy, that as the French while men are never let alone, just so while children they are never left alone.”*

Ere I close this brief outline of the effects of sports and pastimes upon our national character, I would call attention to the Volunteer movement, which may be considered the great fact of our time. In no other country in Europe, could an institution so essentially and exclusively popular have been allowed. Inaugurated entirely among the people, it has in a short time achieved extraordinary vitality. This is not a mere temporary outburst of feeling, as if on the near ap-

* Buckle's "History of Civilization," p. 574.

proach of an enemy to our shores, it is the determination of a free people to preserve intact that freedom handed down from their forefathers. But while this forms the basis of its establishment, its peculiar charm is the element of manly sport which is so strongly combined with it. The pomp and mimic circumstance of war would soon have lost their influence. It is the rival contest of skill which thus counteracts the dull routine of drill. And as in the days of yore the sturdy Briton was wont to display his power with the bow, so now with a far more effective weapon he enters into the struggle, and in the annual displays that take place the champion prize has more than once been carried off by a citizen. This popular movement is one, indeed, of which a nation may well be proud; and I say it emphatically, wherever there is a volunteer, there will be found a loyal subject; and England, with her citizen army, has no need to fear an enemy from abroad nor a rebel at home.



CHAPTER II.

ON THE SPORTS OF THE NATIONS OF ANTIQUITY.

IN tracing the manners and customs of the Ancients, for the purpose of ascertaining what were their sports, we are met with a difficulty at the outset, in connecting the word Sport, as it is now understood, with any similar use of it among the people. Moreover, we know little or nothing of the Assyrians or Babylonians, as to their social life or their national customs. Yet under despotic sway, when princes estimated the people as mere instruments of their mere whims and wills, there could hardly be a place for sport, except immediately around the Court. The exhumation of the sculptures of Nimroud has brought to light some indications of the chase, but the nature of the country, consisting of large and extensive

plains, bare of forests, could not have afforded much opportunity for game. And the abject condition of the people precludes the idea of their joining in those sports which formed the principal occupation of the monarch and his nobles.

The Persians are always described as a war-like people, and also as being fond of the chase, but the government was a pure despotism, under which every man's life and liberty were at the mercy of the sovereign. Such is not the condition of a people who would devote themselves to manly sports and pastimes. The Egyptians were somewhat similarly situated. The monarchy was a pure despotism, the people merely slaves, and the very nature of the country, annually inundated over a large extent, precludes the idea of sport, for it was barren of timber, and no forests varied the scene, so that there was no cover for game. And if we assume the employment of the people, and the keeping them from being idle, and consequently mutinous, as the chief motive for the building of the Pyramids, it would seem to dispose at once of all sport or pastime among them.

Among the Jews there is not a trace, nor

even a tradition of sport, for when Herod the Great, according to Josephus (B. xv. c. 8), endeavoured to introduce the games of the Roman circus among the people, they were not even approved of as being "opposite to Jewish customs, for we have had no such shows delivered down to us, as fit to be used or exhibited by us." We read of their being expert with the bow and sling: the tribe of Benjamin in particular excelling in these exercises. But the whole nation was restricted by forms and ceremonies, planned and carried out to insure a separation from all without, but tending rather to restrain than encourage any free thought or action.

With reference to the Hindus, a once powerful nation, I will merely make one extract from a popular author to show that under such conditions there could be no possible place for sports or pastimes. "Slavery—abject eternal slavery—was the natural state of the great body of the people; it was the state to which they were doomed by physical laws impossible to resist. There is no instance on record of any tropical country in which wealth having been extensively accumulated the people had escaped their fate: no instance in which the

heat of the climate had not caused an abundance of food, and the abundance of food caused an unequal distribution first of wealth then of political power. Among nations subjected to these conditions the people have counted for nothing. They have no voice in the management of the State; no control over the wealth their own industry has created. Their only business has been to labour—their only duty to obey.”* There are the remains of the drama, but it is doubtful whether this did not arise after the Macedonian invasion. It may, therefore, be assumed that it owes its origin to the Greek.

In taking this cursory glance over these once mighty nations of the past, my object has been to show that under the despotic rule of their monarchs the people were the mere slaves of their ruler's will and pleasure. The kings and nobles might have displayed a passion for the sports of the chase, but a slave population could not have any inherent feeling for such sport. This can only exist where the people are free, and are left to the free enjoyment of those pursuits which are the basis of a manly character, and which require

* Buckle's "History," p. 73.

quick perception, a natural fitness for sport, and an indifference to the danger—characteristics to be found only where man lives free, self-reliant, and depending solely upon himself and upon his own resources. A love of sport engenders an independent spirit, and it is owing to the indifference to it amongst the ancient nations of the East, and the want of all pastime among the people, that Assyrian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Persian dynasties disappeared. The spirit of liberty could not exist where life and limb were at the mercy and caprice of a tyrant. Their religion, moreover, kept them in abject submission. The practice of astrology gave to the priests an absolute sway over the minds of the people, who thus trodden down and debased, mentally and bodily, both by king and priest, were the mere puppets of those in power—were mere moving machines in the hands of their despotic masters. We may here see the cause of the downfall of these kingdoms. There was no internal life. Neither sport nor pastime cheered their hours of leisure, nor helped to form the elements of a hardy population. The monarchies survived only so long as there was no external foe, and then

falling to pieces were literally lost in the surrounding soil. Thus the Assyrian was swallowed up by the Babylonian empire. This again succumbed before the power of the Persian, which in its turn gave way before the free spirit of Grecian independence. These kingdoms, once so powerful, are now deserts. With all the science and knowledge that had once been cultivated under those mighty sceptres, not a trace remains of even a remote influence upon the minds of succeeding generations of men. Of the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian kingdoms, the very cities once so magnificent for their size and splendour, have perished from off the face of the earth, their locality even unknown. Egypt still shows the signs of a mighty past in her pyramids and sepulchral monuments; but for any impression on the mind of man, they all are as though they never had been. Nineveh, so long the capital of the Assyrian empire, has been so annihilated that the spot where it once stood cannot be exactly determined. Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," has in its fall but fulfilled the prediction of the prophet—it "shall be as when God over-

threw Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation : neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there ; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there ; but wild beasts of the desert shall lie there ; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures ; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there" (Isaiah xiii. 19-21). Persepolis is in utter ruin. And of Memphis, long the metropolis of Egypt and the royal residence of the Pharaohs, once mighty in her size and power, now not the most searching inquiry can certainly ascertain its place, such has been the effect of tyranny, superstition, and degradation. "In Asia there is no government which wears even the semblance of freedom. In form, as well as in practice, they are purely despotic, the princes being tyrants, the people slaves. Nor is the power of the prince controlled by the influence of manners, as in Europe, where the monarch, however absolute, seldom indulges in the licence of despotic sway, and where life and property are in some degree protected. The manners of Asia favour the exercise of unlimited power, and this vast continent is accordingly one scene of excess

and misrule, where the mere will of the monarch is a warrant for the proscription and death of any individual, however powerful, and for the ruin of his family. The people, ruled according to those severe maxims of despotism, live in continued dread of violence and wrong, and they naturally in self-defence resort to fraud, falsehood, and treachery, which are the resources of weakness. Thus all sense of independence is at last extinguished; and under the iron rod of their political masters they degenerate into abject slaves, without honour, intelligence, or morality. Despotism in Asia assumes so severe a character that it invades the security of private life, relaxes all social ties, and reacting on the people with its pernicious influence, tends still further to debase them, and to fit them for the endurance of its degrading yoke.”*

The Greek now appears on the scene. The history of this singular people seems like a vast episode in the world's history. Whatever may have been their origin, whether sprung from the Phœnicians, or whether they were a peculiar and mixed race who appeared for a while standing out in relief from the rest of the world, and

* Enc. Brit. Art. “Asia.”

then disappearing, they have displayed such mighty intellect, such vast depths of knowledge, such a plenitude of mind in every department of science and art, that to this day their mere remains form the models of grace and beauty for all succeeding ages. As early in history as the great Jewish Lawgiver's time, they seemed to have emerged from a state of barbarism, and to have assumed something of the form of civil government and polity. By degrees they imported from the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile all the learning and philosophy of those nations, which, passing through the alembic of the Grecian mind, formed into a mighty mental fabric all the known wisdom of mankind. "When the world was yet in its infancy, a race of men appeared in the stream of human history with intellects and frames so glorious that no parallel was ever found to them in history; that race was the ancient Greek. The precise period of their appearance upon earth is of course not known. Of Homer and Troy we know nothing; the precise date when the noblest of all statues was carved is equally a mystery. One thing is certain, the statues

remain; the ruins of the Parthenon may yet be found; the Homeric ballad, the greatest of all human works, is still extant; and Plato, and Socrates, Iskander and Aristotle, Euclid and Herodotus, are names as familiar to men now living as household words. Wonderful and most mysterious race! Divinest chapter in human history! Unparalleled, unequalled, whence came ye? Whither have ye gone, fading away into the mists of the past? What is the Parthian, or Mongolian, or Roman, or Germanic glory compared with yours?"* Language like this conveys the idea that in the ancient Greek was to be found the model standard of excellence. Nor is this an exaggerated picture. Physically and mentally he towered beyond all that went before him, and over all the races that were coeval with him; the moderns have but set him up as their beau-ideal. From whence sprung this race, for no trace of it is left in the land once ennobled by his presence? Dr. Knox offers the following theory: "There never existed a race of men and women formed like the Apollo, the Venus, the Dian, the Hercules, the Niobe, the

* Knox: "Races of Men," p. 395

Bacchus, but there existed a combination of circumstances in the Peninsula of Italy (Southern), Greece and her isles, and Asia Minor, which gave rise to the production of numerous persons, of whom some equalled, still more approached, these glorious figures I speak of; matchless and perfectly beautiful, they had only to be seen, to be immediately understood. Genius, lofty genius, abounded everywhere. The robust energy, the vivacity, and vigour of the Scandinavian and Celtic races came to be mingled with an oriental race or races, of which we know nothing, but of whose sublimity of mind the Cyclopean walls leave unmistakeable indications. Oriental minds allied to Copt and Chaldee. Monuments analogous, but not identical with, Egyptian Thebes, and Asiatic Nimrod and Babylon, with men who lived beyond the Babylonish and Coptic period. The Italian peninsula no doubt was once also theirs, as well as Greece, and it may be the Lusitanian. These fine and classic regions, the northern, that is, Saxon, Celtic, and Gothic barbarians have constantly invaded, hoping to make them their own; they have as constantly failed, for no race can per-

manently locate itself in a continent in which it had not been placed by nature. And now the populations of Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor having returned pretty nearly to their aboriginal condition in respect of race, are as they were before, timid, cowardly, unwarlike; serfs by nature, slaves of the superstitions of the Roman Catholic and Greek Churches. An idiot vulgar Goth reigns in Greece, the imbecile House of Hapsburg lords it in Italy, the savage Turcoman scourges Asia Minor. From the people themselves all traces of the men who form the glory of this world have disappeared, leaving behind them, in their nearly aboriginal condition, that population on which the Scandinavian and Celtic and Gothic blood being once engrafted, originated all that was great and glorious; but now left to itself, exhibits to the world a spectacle most lamentable and deplorable.”*

Of this incomparable race it may be truly said that they were entirely addicted to sports and pastimes; their education led them to be self-dependent. The games which they practised themselves, and which were introduced by their

* “Races of Men,” p. 400.

great Lawgivers in order to inure their bodies to bear hardship and fatigue, formed a part of their religion. At the Isthmian, combats of every kind were exhibited; at the Nemæan, there were horse and foot races, chariot races, boxing and wrestling; at the Olympic, the pentathlum, or running, leaping, wrestling, boxing, and throwing the quoit; and at the Pythian, horse-racing, boxing, the pancratium, fighting with armour, running, wrestling, and throwing the quoit. And it is to be remarked at these festivals that the competitors were not striving for high honours, whether local or national, or for great pecuniary prizes. They were content to receive as the reward of their skill and achievements the simple garland of Pine or Parsley, of Olive or Laurel. The fame of the conquest was enough for the victor, who was a favoured champion for life, and was supported ever after at the expense of the State.

Nor were the Greeks less to be wondered at for the perfection to which they brought all matters connected with the mind. The importance, attached to the qualities of corporeal vigour and strength, was to enable them to



maintain their freedom as men. Liberty was to them a watchword, and no means were wanting to gain and retain it. But there is no branch of science, literature, and art, in which they did not excel. Their architecture remains to this day a model for imitation; painting knows no higher standard; their sculpture is even now unrivalled; poetry has long since acknowledged the Greek as its first and greatest exponent; and the drama owes both its rise and its excellence to the Greek. It may, perhaps, detract from this exalted view, that the origin of these arts must be referred to the one fact, that the Greek was an idolater, and that "not only the drama, but all poetry and all the fine arts, are the result of idol worship—of that worship which degraded men into the worshippers of the works of their own hands."* This even does not take from the Greeks their special character as lovers of freedom, as men gifted in an extraordinary degree with talents, and that these talents, their very mental development could not have been brought to so high a standard but for that passionate love of liberty

* Darley's "Grecian Drama," p. 154.

of which they were the splendid examples. The nature of their early education led them to esteem this liberty as the one great principle of life. It was for this that their legislators so strictly enforced military discipline, while at the same time they regulated all their religious festivals. There was thus an intimate connexion of religion and war; and as dancing formed a part of their religious exercises, "good dancers and good fighters were synonymous terms." So much, indeed, were their festivals mingled with their wars, that there was an identity even between their military tactics and the arrangement of their festivals, so that their choruses and their armies were drawn up in the same order, and received the same names. The language of their dramas aimed at the follies and vices of the times, and the freedom with which these attacks were made, even upon individuals, would not have been permitted except where there was free liberty of speech, such as is entirely unknown in these days among the nations of the Continent. Not one of the ancient dynasties would have permitted the repetition of such passages as are to be found in

the Grecian dramas; and these are an evidence that the Greeks enjoyed the full licence of liberty. Many of their dramatists were soldiers, and rose to high command—a combination unknown in any other country.

In the early account of the Romans we find a people among whom the sports of the chase formed a principal occupation. Apt in war, impatient of rule, a contest with a neighbour was at all times imminent. Whoever were the original inhabitants of the Italian Peninsula, whether Pelasgians, or sprung from a branch of the Grecian family, they were conspicuous for their warlike propensities. They also emulated the Greeks in the establishment of sacred festivals. The games of the circus, the horse and chariot-races, were all well calculated to produce a free and daring spirit. Nor ought we to omit from this category the once famous gladiatorial shows; but what a falling off from the lofty-minded Greek. In their public celebrations these contended for glory alone, but the Roman soon degenerated from this high standard, and, following his own early barbarous tendencies, instituted the degrading spectacle of mutual butchery. Turning

from this, we may notice the establishment of the drama, based indeed upon a Grecian model, yet unable to reach the same eminence. But as with the Greek so with the Roman, the full measure of speech indicates the extent of the liberty, if not indeed even of the licence, which was allowed. The Roman citizen was free, and proud of the freedom he enjoyed.

But it may be asked if, with such institutions, such a spirit of liberty at one time pervading whole nations with all these advantages, the Greek like the Roman has passed away, of what avail then is this boasted freedom? The empires of the East have faded away. Egypt lies in a state of degradation. The very name of Greek in modern days has become a byword, and Rome exists only under ecclesiastical rule. It is indeed a melancholy truth, that the nations of the past, enslaved or free, have alike passed away. Of what avail then is liberty? What good to be free? Of those mighty nations now not a trace remains. The Greek and the Roman, although lovers of freedom themselves, nourished within themselves the germ of their own dissolution. Though the people were free, slavery was

an institution within their own bosoms, and led to such luxury and dissipation that the people became enervated, and thus after a time losing their love of liberty they became a ready prey to their invader. With the nations of old, when the necessity for conquest ceased, they fell to pieces, and left no trace, no vestige, behind. But with the Greek the case is far different. He lives now even in the midst of his own relics. In every department of art or science, though Greece has fallen, the Greek still lives. The human mind knows no higher standard. "This was the country which produced the men who fought at Marathon and conquered on the banks of the Granicus. Pyrrhus belonged to them, and Pericles, Aristotle, and Plato, Socrates, Demosthenes, Iskander equal to Napoleon, Archimedes, Euclid, Thucydides, Herodotus, Homer, Pindar, Anacreon, Phidias, and they who carved the immortal and transcendant Venus and Niobe. Where shall we commence or where end?"† To them also we owe that spirit of liberty, the watchword for all succeeding nations—alas! how seldom learnt and attained. The people that first initiated popular

* Knox, "Races of Men," p. 405.]

sports and pastimes, whose festivals springing from themselves, kept up as they periodically recurred the spirit of all manly games and exercises. To these we trace the first germ of freedom and its principles. They who were taught to run, fight, wrestle, race, and throw the quoit, could not be slaves. The example holds to this day.

Nor ought we to omit mention of the share the Roman had in achieving freedom for himself and leaving it as a lasting legacy to those who came after. Rome can boast of a long array of names second only to the all-pervading Greek. But though the Greek towers far above every other people in the march of intellectual development, to the Roman we owe many things. The Roman law is the foundation of our own jurisprudence. But as in Greece so in Rome, the elements of decadence were there corroding their very existence. The Roman was free, but the dependents were slaves. By degrees he ceased to cultivate the soil, or to mix in manly pursuits, so by degrees the free spirit of his forefathers died away, and he was unable to cope with the rude and warlike hordes from the far East that assailed him. In these days such a prostration of civili-

zation before barbarism could scarcely take place. The introduction of firearms has so entirely changed the character of fighting that no horde of savages could make a stand against the discipline of modern warfare. But in the days of Roman greatness the bow and battle-axe, the spear and shield, were the chief weapons of combat. The encounter was altogether between man and man. Discipline for a time warded off the danger, but could not withstand a succession of countless thousands even of barbarians. And Rome fell prostrate, mighty even in her fall.

Thus the nations of the East have faded away. Greece, too, the founder of manly sport, the basis of liberty, the forerunner in the march of intellectual development, has succumbed to its fate. Rome has withered away. Wherever there is slavery there can be no permanent State stability, the toil of the slave leads but to luxury, dissipation, and ultimate decadence. Despotism must end in disruption. A nation that would live must be all free, but freedom lies in action. The courage that would insure liberty has its origin in those sports and pastimes, without which man would in vain struggle against self-degradation.



CHAPTER III.

ON THE CHARACTER OF THE ENGLISH.

WHEN Cæsar invaded this country, "it was not the barbarous Celt whom he met in Kent, nor did he meet the Germans, whom he knew well, he met the Flemings, deeply intermingled with the Phœnicians. When had the Celts war chariots? Did the dictator encounter anything in Gaul? An ethnological question which, if settled in the affirmative, would, no doubt, be a clue to the great divergence of character existing between the English and the nations of the Continent."* The following passage seems to confirm this view: "The conclusion to which I think we must come from the perusal of Cæsar's account of such of the Britons as he saw is that, although they were

* Knox, "Races of Men," p. 14.

barbarous they were certainly not savages. They were in possession of nearly all the domestic animals known to the Greeks, Romans, and Egyptians; they possessed the art of making malleable iron; and they mixed, smelted, and imported tin. They had a fixed money, although a rude one. In war they had an infantry, a cavalry, and war-chariots. There can be no doubt but that they possessed the art of manufacturing pottery; and I think it most probable that they had the art of weaving their wool into a coarse fabric, and perhaps of dyeing these fabrics with woad. We may then safely pronounce our forefathers to have been a more advanced people than were the Mexicans and Peruvians when first seen by Europeans, 1600 years after the time of Cæsar. They encountered the first invader of their country with far more courage, and even military prowess, than did the Mexicans, the Spaniards, or than did the Hindus, the Greeks and Macedonians of Alexander.”* These opinions clearly indicate that the primitive inhabitants of these islands, or at all events those that encountered Cæsar, were

* Lecture by J. Crawford, F.R.S.

not rude and untutored barbarians. Their very skill in war shows them to have attained some degree of civilization. "The Saxons who succeeded have been characterized as fierce and war-like, cruel and rapacious, yet even among them are traits which indicate some of the higher qualities of mind. This ferocity ascribed to the Saxon character would seem to suit better the dark melancholy physiognomies of Asia and Africa than the fair pleasing and blue-eyed countenance by which our ancestors are described." At all events "an incident will show that they had a pride of mind which could not endure disgrace. Twenty-nine Saxons strangled themselves to avoid being brought into a theatre for a gladiatorial show."* Such are the elements which formed the basis of the national character.

In his history Macaulay† gives the following account of the nation's progress: "I shall relate how the new settlement was during many troubled years successfully defended against foreign and domestic enemies. How, under

* Sharon Turner, vol. i. p. 205.

† Vol. i. p. 1.

that settlement, the authority of law, and the security of property were found to be compatible with a liberty of discussion and of individual action never before known. How from the auspicious union of order and freedom sprang a prosperity of which the annals of human affairs had furnished no example. How our country, from a state of ignominious vassalage, rapidly rose to the place of umpire among European powers. How her opulence and her martial glory grew together. How by wise and resolute good faith was gradually established a public credit fruitful of marvels, which to the statesman of any former age would have seemed incredible. How a gigantic commerce gave birth to a maritime power, compared with which every other maritime power, ancient or modern, sinks into insignificance." Yet this is the country thus ignominiously disparaged. "The last of the Western Powers conquered, but the first that was flung away." And the people long enslaved, and thus rendered incapable of self-defence, were run over and subdued by the conquering Saxon, who brought back the people to a state of servitude. The nation, too, once

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living in the light of the Christian faith were brought back to the thick darkness of heathenism under the presiding gods of Thor and Wodin.

Such a period was scarcely favourable for any development of character. The original Briton was either driven into the mountain fastnesses of Wales, or, overwhelmed by the torrent of Saxon invasion, sank into a state of servitude from which he does not seem to have emerged, except under a general amalgamation with the invaders, who in their conquests still retained the germs of the liberty they had brought with them. "The Battle of Hastings* gave up the whole population of England to the tyranny of the Norman race. The subjugation of a nation by a nation has seldom even in Asia been more complete. The country was portioned out among the captains of the invaders. Strong military institutions, closely connected with the institution of property, enabled the foreign conquerors to oppress the children of the soil. A cruel penal code, cruelly enforced, guarded the privileges and even the sports of the alien tyrants. Yet the subject race, though beaten down and trodden

* Macaulay, vol. i. p. 6.

under foot, still made its sting felt. Some bold men, the favourite heroes of our oldest ballads, betook themselves to the woods, and there, in defiance of the curfew laws and the forest laws, waged a predatory war against their oppressors." The tyranny of the Norman thus produced a spirit of lawlessness among the people. The necessity of subsistence kept up that love for the wild sports of the chase which all the cruelty of the Norman could not suppress. The free spirit of the Saxon still groaning under the hated yoke, remained unbroken, although the Norman looked down with contempt upon his Saxon vassal. The distinction of race remained strongly marked even to the reign of King John; but before the end of the reign of his grandson it had almost disappeared. "In the time of Richard I. the ordinary imprecation of a Norman gentleman was, 'May I become an Englishman;' his ordinary form of indignant denial was, 'Do you take me for an Englishman.' The descendant of such a gentleman, a hundred years later, was proud of the English name."* "From the reign of King John commences the history of the English people.

* Macaulay, vol. i. p. 8.

It is to this period that we must look for the origin of our freedom, our prosperity, and our glory. Then it was that the great English people was formed, that the national character began to establish those peculiarities which it has ever since retained, and that our fathers became emphatically islanders. Islanders not merely in geographical position, but in their politics, their feelings, and their manners; then first appeared with distinctness that constitution which has ever since through all changes preserved its identity—that constitution of which all the other free constitutions in the world are copies, and which, in spite of some defects, deserves to be regarded as the best under which any great society has ever yet existed during many years.”* This brief sketch shows a clear but waving outline of national progress. From the time of the Saxon invasion, there is a strongly marked yet chequered existence of national character, through all the subsequent changes of its career. The Norman Conquest brought a despot into the country, but the free spirit still remained; for we must not forget that it was the English à Becket of Saxon descent

* Macaulay, vol. i. p. 8.

who withstood a Norman king. And we owe also to the stubborn Saxon that free spirit which, though oppressed, remained unsubdued, and at length compelled even the haughty Norman to yield to its influence, and thus was formed a nation of liberty-loving people out of the trammels of a serfdom almost as debasing as the lowest state of Asiatic slavery.

The Saxon had always been fond of hunting and hawking, and the vast forests scattered throughout the land, which had been made to check this tendency, at a subsequent period were the very means of encouraging these manly sports ; and not only were these encouraged, but certain privileges were granted to the free burghers of towns in order to induce them to practise manly games. "Such were accorded to the citizens of London, who in Henry I.'s reign were allowed to have chases and hunt as well and as fully as their ancestors have had—that is to say, in the Chiltre in Middlesex and Surrey. Hence we find that these privileges were of ancient standing. They were also confirmed by the succeeding charters. Fitzstephen, who wrote towards the close of the reign of Henry II.,

says that the Londoners delight themselves with hawks and hounds, for they have the liberty of hunting in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, at Chilton, and in Kent to the waters of Grey.”* Thus the privilege of hunting, even in the twelfth century, was not confined to the lords of the soil; and to show how the spirit of sport must have pervaded the land, even the ladies used to hunt. Strutt says, p. 12 (in which are given some plates), “We find them according to this representation in the open fields, winding the horn, rousing the game and pursuing it without any other assistance. We may also observe that upon these occasions the female Nimrods dispensed with the method of riding best suited to the modesty of the sex, and sat astride on the saddle, like the men. But this indecorous custom I trust was never general, nor of long continuance even with the heroines who were most delighted with these martial exercises. An author of the seventeenth century speaks of another fashion adopted by the fair huntresses of the town of Bury, in Suffolk. The Bury ladies,” says he, “that used hawking and hunting were once in a great

* Strutt, p. 15.

vaine of wearing breeches, which, it seems, gave rise to many severe and ludicrous sarcasms. The only argument in favour of this habit was decency in case of an accident. But it was observed that such accidents ought to be prevented in a manner more consistent with the delicacy of the sex—that is, by refraining from these dangerous recreations.” And it is to be noted in the accounts handed down to us of the manly exercises of our ancestors, that they were not confined to the young nobility. The sons of citizens and yeomen had also their sports, for the same author says—“Those practised at an early period by the young Londoners seem to have been derived from the Romans. They consisted of various attacks and evolutions performed on horseback, the youth being armed with shields and pointless lances, resembling the *Ludus Trojæ*, or Troy game, described by Virgil. These amusements, according to Fitzstephen, were appropriated to the season of Lent; but at other times they exercised themselves with archery, fighting with clubs and bucklers, and running at the quintain; and in the winter, when the frost set in, they would go upon the ice, and run against each

other with poles, in imitation of lances in a joust, and frequently one or both were beaten down, not always without hurt, for some break their arms and some their legs, but youth emulous of glory seeks these exercises preparatory against the time that war shall demand their presence."

The author further adds, "the like kind of pastimes no doubt were practised by young men in other parts of the kingdom;" and this would seem to have been the case, for in Pennant's "Tour in Wales," he says in former days the youth of Chester exercised themselves in running, archery, wrestling, mock fights, gallant and romantic triumphs, and other manly sports, at the Rood Dee, a place without the walls of the city.

It is essential to observe, in the accounts of sports here given, that they refer not only to the nobility, but to the common people. This passion, derived from Saxon and Danish ancestors, still remained, and was generally encouraged, by the reigning monarchs, who would appear to have thus endeavoured to raise up in the commons of the land a power sufficient to keep in check the feudal rule of the barons. As long, therefore, as the sovereigns were addicted to their warlike

sports, the same spirit kept up, was preserved among the citizens and yeomen ; and thus, until Richard the First's reign, all classes alike were engaged in the exercises congenial to their condition of life. This monarch's career reads somewhat like a romance, as given in the exquisite tale of "Ivanhoe," more especially that portion which connects him with the rude outlaws of the forests, although, alas ! for fact, the manners there so graphically portrayed belong, in truth, to a much later period. In John and his son Henry's reigns, the spirit of chivalry seems to have given way before the urgent desires of both Barons and Commons to achieve for themselves and descendants the first elements of freedom ; and the warlike and determined spirit so often displayed by the burgesses may be considered in part as leading to a recognition of their primitive right to have a voice in the affairs of the nation, and thus appeared the first germ of that marvellous human achievement of constitutional government, "the Houses of Parliament." With Edward I. the warlike spirit again revived. The Commons, grown more independent, showed themselves worthy of the

freedom they had acquired. The events of this reign were pregnant of ultimate good to the country. The conquest of Wales consolidated the kingly power, and the assumption of dominion over Scotland, once made, never gave way altogether until the two kingdoms became amalgamated. The most important event, however, for the people, was the clause added to the Charter of King John, that no tax should be levied without the consent of the Commons. It must be evident that no concession of the kind would have been made, if the people had not shown themselves determined to work out their own liberty ; no similar privilege was gained by any of the nations of the Continent : they still languished under kingly and lordly pressure, until, as in France, the nobility contrived to exempt their order from every kind of tax, and saddled all the burdens of State upon the people. Nor ought we to omit mention of a peculiarity—and at the same time a privilege of the English—namely, the prerogative of the king to establish fairs. “ The privilege was usually granted to a corporate town, or to a favourite nobleman, or even to some religious institution. Persons

frequenting the fairs were exempt from arrest for debt during the fair, and during the time of going and returning.”* These fairs were often the scene of many rude games and pastimes, which formed, indeed, a part of the business of the fair itself. And this exemption from arrest is certainly a proof of the condition of the people as to their liberty, and the games tended to keep up a spirit for manly sports.

As a consequence of the privileges conceded to the inhabitants, which led ultimately to a diminution of the power of the barons, the number of the towns very much increased; sometimes these originated in the habitations of the workmen employed to labour for the lord of some stately castle, and as the people grew wealthy they were often subject to exactions from the feudal lord. The prince was then appealed to, and it suited his purpose to take the part of the townspeople, for by so doing he was enabled to hold some control over the baron himself, and when the towns increased, and were thus supported by the king, they naturally took part

* “Lectures on Ancient Commerce.” By J. W. Gilbart, F.R.S.

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with him against the feudal aristocracy. They also furnished supplies of men to the crown, which had been dependent hitherto upon the feudal retainers for their armies. A still more important aid was the money which the prince was enabled to raise by benevolence or loan, but each grant made by the people led to a further augmentation of the municipal influence, and of its weight as a counterpoise to the barons; for, as the people had gained the privilege of levying taxes upon themselves at their option, it proved of great benefit to the cause of the liberty of the subject. It is easy to perceive how mightily the influence which the Commons had thus acquired must have tended to curb that of the barons, to free the crown from feudal thralldom, and to enable it to establish a regular system of justice and police throughout the country.





CHAPTER IV.

ON THE CHARACTER OF THE ENGLISH—*continued.*

This is one of the peculiarities of the early history of this country, and is indeed characteristic of the nation, that the Commons, so far from being excluded when any sports took place, on the contrary, were often invited to attend. "In Richard the Second's reign, 1390, in the 12th year and month of November, yet during the Parliament, was executed in Smithfield of London, a martial Just and Tournament, where all such persons as came in upon the King's party, their armour and apparel was garnished with white harts and crowns of Gold about their necks, and of that sort were 23 knights and 23 ladies also appareled as above is said, had with 23 chains of gold the horses of them, and so conveyed them through

the city unto Smithfield, from the tower of London, where the King and Queen and many other great estates being present, after proclamation by the Heralds made, many goodly and martial acts of war were then put in use to the great recreation and comfort of the King and Queen and all other Bachelors of the same. To this disport came many strangers, among the which the Earl of Seynpoule, the Lord Ostreuant, son and heir to the Duke of Holland, and a younger son of the Earl of Ostryche, were greatly commended; and when this just had continued by sundry by the space of 24 days to the great comfort and recreation of many young and lusty bachelors desirous to win worship, and to the King's great honour, that by all that season kept open household for all honest comers, it was finished, and the strangers returned to their countries with many rich gifts."*

Some events occurred in the fifteenth century which produced great changes throughout the world. The invention of gunpowder was the commencement of a new era in the art of war, and also in the method of sport. Hitherto the

* "Fabyan's Chronicle," by Ellis, p. 534.

bow had been the principal instrument of destruction, but now another element of warfare presented itself, of which the monarchs were ready enough to take advantage. The practice of archery in the villages from boyhood produced those famous bowmen that won the victory upon many battle-fields of the Continent. But archery now began to decline, and the solid butts were no longer the busy scene of the trials of skill and strength. The new firearms, although in a very rude state, even if they did not do much damage, yet produced the desired effect of inspiring a fear, so well depicted in Hotspur's delineation of the foppish lord in Henry IV. :—

“ And that it was great pity, so it was,
That villainous saltpetre should be digg'd
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroy'd
So cowardly ; and, but for these vile guns,
He would himself have been a soldier.”

But the character of the nation during the early part of the fifteenth century is so exquisitely displayed by the immortal bard in the plays of Henry IV. and V. that we seem again to live in them. The rollicking jollity of tavern life, the tenor of which even remained to the last century ;

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the concoction of robbery, indicating a reckless and somewhat lawless course; and, by contrast, the stern judge Gascoigne compelling even royalty to submit to lawful power, these are traits essentially English. But a great change was creeping over the land; the nation had long groaned under the tyranny of the Church, and the spirit of inquiry, once set in motion, rested not until it culminated in the Reformation. The liberty of thought, and of free expression of that thought, once acknowledged, would seem to lead almost necessarily to an expansion of the liberty of the subject. The Tudor family, although somewhat despotic in disposition, yet displayed a fondness for sport. Henry VIII. in his youth entered freely into the spirit of the rough amusements of the age, and was well capable of taking a part among the combatants in a joust or tournament. Queen Elizabeth herself was much addicted to pastimes not quite in accordance with modern notions of feminine life. The bear-garden had its charms for the virgin monarch, who also took part in the sports of hunting and hawking; and we are told that horse-racing about this time became a great rage among the people. Burton,

in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," with reference to these diversions, says that hunting and hawking were fit only for the upper classes, and he then gives the following enumeration of sports: " Ringing, bowling, shooting, playing with keel-pins, tronks, coits, pitching of bars, hurling, wrestling, leaping, running, fencing, mustering, swimming, playing with wasters, foils, footballs, balowns, running at the quintain, and the like, are common recreations of countryfolks, and these were considered as adapted to both town and country; bull-baitings, bear-baitings, dancers on ropes, jugglers, comedies, tragedies, artillery-gardens, and cock-fighting."

It is well known that James I. not only practised sport himself, but recommended it to others, those especially which tended to give vigour to the body, the king himself having published an edict allowing sports and recreations to such as attended public worship, which was ordered to be publicly read by the clergy after divine service. "Even as late as 1610, his son Henry held a tournament, and with six others, was the challenger of Great Britain, which being taken, the 'barriers' were held in Whitehall in the pre-

sence of the king and queen, with two several weapons, at push-of-pike, and with single sword." And while the king himself took to hunting as a favourite pastime, the working people stuck to their foot-ball, quoits, pitching the bar, shovel-board, &c. But an event now took place which has had a material influence on the manners of the whole country. In Elizabeth's time, in consequence of the increase of London, proclamations were made to restrain the buildings, through fear that there would be a famine among the inhabitants from the want of the necessary supplies, or from the difficulty of gaining those supplies. James finding that these edicts were not exactly obeyed frequently renewed them, though a strict execution seems still to have been wanting. "This policy is contrary to that which has ever been practised by all princes who studied the increase of their authority, to allure the nobility to court, to engage them in expensive pleasures or employments which dissipate their fortune, to increase their subjection to ministers by attendance, to weaken their authority in the provinces by absence, these have been the common arts of arbitrary government. But

James, beside that he had certainly laid no plan for extending his power, had no money to support a splendid court, or bestow on a numerous retinue of gentry and nobility. He thought, too, that by living together they became more sensible of their own strength, and were apt to indulge too curious researches into matters of government. To remedy the present evil he was desirous of dispersing them into their country seats, where he hoped they would bear a more submissive reverence to his authority, and receive less support from each other; but the contrary effect soon followed. The riches amassed during their residence at home rendered them independent. The influence acquired by hospitality made them formidable. They would not be led by the court; they could not be driven; and thus the system of the English government received a total and a sudden alteration in the course of less than forty years.”* And to this cause may no doubt be traced that habit of country life which prevails at present in England, but which cannot be found equally strong in any other nation of Europe.

The following curious description of the

* Hume, vol. vi. p. 169.

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English, taken from the French, is in the "Annual Register" for 1766 :—"England, at present so jealous of its liberty of thinking and acting, was once the slave of priests and tyrants. William the Conqueror carried his power so far as to oblige the people to put out the fires and go to bed at six o'clock. The English for a long time paid a tax of a crown a head to the Pope. There was a time when the priests, who meddle with everything, had rendered the people so exceedingly superstitious as to make them believe, not only that the health of their souls, but of their bodies also, depended on a regular attendance at public worship. We read in Jurieu and others that one of their kings, on viewing the carcase of a stag which he had just killed, cried, 'But by heavens he was in good health, though he never heard mass nor vespers.'

"The English are much changed since that time, but the change cost them many a bloody war; the generality of them being naturally excessive in everything, they passed in a short time from slavery to licentiousness, from extreme devotion to the most determined impiety. Every individual having divested himself of his trouble-

some prejudices, gave himself up to his own humour and opinions. Royalty was overturned in the person of the unfortunate Charles I., who suffered death without cause and without pity. This prince saying to those who conducted him to prison, 'That he thought himself accountable for his actions to God alone,' their captain had the insolence to answer, 'Very true, and therefore we intend shortly to send you to God for that purpose.'

"During the reign of Charles II. their manners underwent great revolution. A taste for literature and gallantry succeeded to fanaticism and piety, but they still continued to preserve that basis of ferocity which is productive of strong reasoning in one, and in another brutality. Perhaps we ourselves are deceived in this matter by our refined politeness, which, according to the English, renders us unnatural. 'In general,' says Mons. de Moralt, 'they perform a good action boldly, and they dare follow their reason in opposition to custom. But their good sense is mixed with whims and extravagances. Their resolutions are generally sudden. It is common in England for a girl to vow that she will marry

the first man she meets, and accordingly they are married. Wine hath sometimes among this people been productive of great cruelty. Some of them have made a vow to murder the first person they meet after leaving the tavern, and they have kept their word. Their noblesse often box or play at bowls with the lowest among their people.

“Some of our nation consider the English stage, which affords that people so much delight, as a proof of their barbarity. Their tragedies, it is true, though interesting and replete with beauties, are nevertheless dramatic monsters, half butchery and half farce. Grotesque character and extravagant pleasantry constitute the chief part of their comedies. In one of these the devil enters sneezing, and somebody says to the devil, ‘God bless you.’ They are not, however, all of this stamp, they have even some in a very good taste, but there are hardly any which give us an advantageous idea of the English nation. Though it is from the theatre that a stranger forms his opinion of the manners of a people, the English comic poets do not endeavour to paint their countrymen such as they

are, for they are said to possess as much humanity as reason.

“A man in disgrace at Court, is in London congratulated with as much solicitude as in other places he is abandoned. The thing for which the English are most culpable, is their deeming suicide an act of bravery. They ought to recollect that even the Athenians, their model, were not suffered to destroy themselves till after they had given their reasons for it. The English, on the contrary, frequently kill themselves on the slightest occasion, even sometimes to mortify another. A husband dissatisfied with the behaviour of his wife, who by his death would be a considerable loser, threatened, if she did not mend her manners, to be revenged of her by hanging himself. The English are now-a-days seldom cruel, except to themselves or in their public spectacles, rarely in their robberies. Their highwaymen generally content themselves with taking your money and being witty on the occasion. One of these people having stopped an English nobleman upon the road, rested his pistol on the door of his coach, and said, ‘This piece, my lord, is worth a hundred guineas. I

would advise your lordship to buy it.' His lordship understood the meaning of these words, gave him the money, and took the pistol, which he immediately presented to the highwayman, who told him with a smile, 'that he must have taken him to be a great fool if he thought the piece was charged.'"

In this century a most rapid advance has been made in all that relates to the comfort, convenience, nay, even refinement, of domestic life, while every manly recreation is now ardently pursued. I shall conclude this chapter with the following graphic description :—

"From the middle of August to the end of October, we have in London what we call 'the dead season.' It is a period of equal dreariness in every city, large or small, throughout the northern temperate zone. 'Not at home,' is the word all over Europe and America. There is, however, one essential point of difference in this matter between England and almost all the rest of the world. To be from town is, with most other people, to be away from home. With us, to leave town is, as a general rule, to go back to the home of our choice. There are human

beings by the million who are chained to London by their work the whole year round ; there are others, by thousands, who hurry through its pleasures for ten or twelve weeks ; but give either of them one day's respite from their respective rounds of business or idleness, relieve them from the tyranny of want or fashion, and their first impulse will be to shake the metropolitan dust from their feet. A Frenchman's ambition may range from an entresol on the Boulevards to an hotel on the Chaussée d'Antin. The well-to-do American may hesitate between a boarding-house in Broadway, and tenement in Fiftieth-street ; but the boundaries, if not of the known, at least of the eligible world, are fixed for the one at the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile, for the other at the last turn in the drive of the central park. Alone among the Teutonic and Scandinavian races we have remained faithful to those rural instincts which distinguished the Northern from the Roman world. For us the town is still man's contrivance ; the country, God's own work. Country life on the Continent is either peasant drudgery or else *vie de château*. Isolation in a family mansion was the proud privilege

of a feudal nobility now broken up, against the democratic and gregarious spirit of the age. But with us the aspirations of the lord of the soil are common to every Londoner. Every Englishman's house is his castle, and the idea of a castle implies a detached, or at least a semi-detached residence. The suburb in England is everywhere outgrowing the city. The town is perpetually going out of town.

“ It is not extreme heat or malaria fever that at this time of the year empties London of its upper ten thousand. September is the pleasantest of the twelve months in town, no less than out of town ; it boasts the freshest air and the most genial temperature. The limits of our urban enjoyments are set by other causes than atmospheric influences. They might be said to be regulated, as in ancient times, by the flight of birds—for from the first day of grouse to the last day of pheasants, London is never in season. Balls, concerts, and operas—even Parliament itself—is crowded in between the last pheasant and the first grouse. Beyond the Channel and beyond the Atlantic, people stick to the town so long as they can move or breathe in it. Villeg-

giatura becomes matter of fashion only when the thermometer has made it a matter of necessity. The Latin races never acquired the love of the country. The Transatlantic Anglo-Saxons have lost it. In Rome even the farmers or *mercanti di campagna* have their homes within the city walls. Their very sports do not imply rustication, as they are limited to shooting quails in the stubbles half a mile or so from the town gates, or to liming nightingales along the hedges of their gardens. Their vineyards have no charm for them when there is no fruit to eat, and when there is, a morning stroll to it, or an afternoon drive answers all the purpose. Between Turin and the Superga Hills, or between Florence and the Fiesole range, the Italian leads an amphibious kind of life. Backwards and forwards morning and evening, he contrives to be both in town and country at the same time. More matter of fact and conscientious, the German has both his town and country house, with his periods of migration from one to the other. A Frankforter may live his ten months on the Fahr Thor, and his nine weeks across the Main at Sachsenhausen, or his city abode in the Mainzer

Strasse may only be separated by the Anlage from his villa on the Mainzer Chaussee. But a Landhaus and a Gartenhaus are necessary to his earthly bliss, and on the first turn of the leaf away he flits with bag and baggage, bed and board, to come back again, gipsy fashion, with goods and chattels, after a short spell of rural relaxation.

“ But, even farther away from home, our Continental neighbours when out of town manage to take out their town with them. Leghorn has its little Leghorn at Montenero ; Rome her miniature at Tivoli or Frascati. Villeggiatura does not mean a home in the country, it means a café, a theatre, a ball-room, all the charms of a town in a provincial place. Even on the Brenta the Venetians, or on the coast at Resina or Torre, at Castellamare or Sorrento, the Neapolitans, never lose sight of one another. Free and pure air may, they admit, be desirable, but social intercourse is necessary ; an intercourse intensified by narrower space, favoured by more thorough idleness, animated by the novelty of petty incident, with an ampler allowance of flirting opportunities, and a new zest to wholesale scandal.

What, again, a town on a hill or by the sea shore, along a river or around a lake, is, or used to be, to the *élite* of a city, a row of hotels near a mineral spring, or a mere rouge-et-noir table near a duke's tumble-down Schloss, has now become to another class of holiday-makers. Villegiatura was but a poor apology for country life, but dissipation at Homburg or Baden has given up even the pretence of it. To a man broiling at Paris, at Munich, or Milan, an escape into one of the steaming valleys round the Taunus can hardly bring relief. It leads only to further and further estrangement from nature. That necessity which the denizens of a city felt, of going, Antæus-like, to his mother earth for a renewal of strength, has with such people ceased to act; and what they call a change of air is little better than a transition from an impure to a still worse tainted element.

“Custom, ennui, doctors, and an over-filled purse take, at this season, many of our countrymen to those German and other resorts which constitute the summer elysium of Continental people. Worn out by London festivities, an English tourist attempts to recruit his health and spirits

at the Kursaal. Watering-places inland and on the coast, with fresh and salt water, with hot and tepid springs, abound in our islands, and are not without their value; but it is not at Buxton or Brighton, at Torquay or Cheltenham, any more than in London, that we look for our homes—for the homes of our preference. Our English homes, palace homes or cottage homes, are scattered ‘all over the pleasant land,’ and to these we come back even when caprice or love of change has induced us to fritter away some of our time with our neighbours at their summer idling-places; for what to them is the close of the year and the eclipse of nature, only brings us the beginning of our real *Villeggiatura*, our family gatherings, and field sports, to restore whatever forces we may have lost among the seductions either of our own or of foreign city life.”*

* *Times*, Saturday, August 23, 1867.





CHAPTER V.

ON THE SPORTS AND PURSUITS OF THE NATIONS OF THE CONTINENT.

IT may seem strange that the several nations of the Continent of Europe, at one time under the same rule, partaking of the same civilization which the Romans carried with them into those parts they subdued, should yet present such great diversities of character, and it may be said equal diversities of government. All the States, with the sole exception of Switzerland, are monarchies, and yet the monarchies all differ in their constitutional bearing the one from the other. These circumstances might seem to point to separate original types, and yet these cannot be so numerous as that every State should comprise a separate race. The Celts form

a large portion of Continental Europe. The Saxon type is widely spread. The barbarous invaders from the East who overturned the Roman Empire, have left their traces behind. Among all these there were originally the rude elements of freedom, and yet, from whatever cause, its growth has been checked, and in some instances entirely lost among the nations of Europe. All the governments are more or less arbitrary, nor can there be discovered among them the germ even of a free constitution. If France cannot claim to be a representative country, still less can Germany. France presents to us the type of government interference in everything, so much so that the people seem to have lost not only the power but even the wish of self-dependence. "In Germany there is an unhealthy tripartite division:—The government; The intellectual class; The people. The government exclusive, narrow-minded, inquisitorial, meddlesome. The small intellectual class, possessing a compass of knowledge and a breadth of thought which makes it lead the speculative intellect of the world. The people, more superstitious, more really unfit for political power than

the inhabitants of England.”* Spain affords a remarkable instance of the influence of bigotry and superstition ; for with a spirit of freedom inherent among the people, slaves to their priests, they are powerless, and the proud Spaniard who once ruled a large portion of the globe, has lost both his pride and his place. The Scandinavian kingdoms possess individual freedom, but apart from any influence in State affairs. The Russian groans under a despotism of almost Eastern abjectness and degradation. The republican form of the Swiss Confederation points to popular freedom. The modern Greek is, alas ! beneath notice. While Italy, only just emerging from a long and grinding tyranny, seems to display an aptitude for liberal institutions which may ere long place it in the van of freedom.

In tracing out this general outline of the nations of Europe, my object is to show that where there is no spirit of freedom there is no inherent love of sport nor of manly pastimes ; and the converse may with equal truth be asserted, that where there is no inherent love of sport and manly pastimes, there can be no spirit of

* “Westminster Review,” vol. xii.

freedom; or it would seem impossible but that some of these nationalities would have ere now asserted their personal rights and achieved their own liberty. But to this it may be said that these have all the freedom they themselves wish for or desire. This can hardly be the case. No people would voluntarily live under the perpetual tyranny of the conscription. No people would voluntarily circumscribe their freedom of locomotion. No people would voluntarily deprive themselves of the right of freely and publicly expressing their opinions. No people would voluntarily shut themselves out of all voice and influence in their own government. Yet such in truth is the actual condition of the greater portion of the States of Europe, even at this day.

Scarcely had the Roman Empire been overturned by the irruption of the barbarians, than the Continent was rudely torn into several kingdoms and principalities. Italy was split up into separate and contending States, a condition which continued until the time of Charlemagne, under whom a semblance of union took place, again to be severed at his death. About this time the

feudal system took its origin in Lombardy ; under it the territorial property belonged to the nobles, who were surrounded by their military retainers and by the serfs of the glebe. " War and the chase were their only pleasures, and their luxury knew no other objects. The education of the gentleman taught him no more than to tame the fiery spirit of the war-horse, to manage with address the buckler and the heavy lance, and to endure without fatigue the weight of the most ponderous cuirass."* These exercises were confined to the nobles and gentry, the common people being merely slaves of their feudal lords. At the same time the gradual increase of the power of the Papacy, and consequently of priestly rule throughout the land, would have a deadening influence over the people, and hence they never recovered the blow they had received in the subjugation of their country by the barbarian. The rise of the Republics of Florence, Venice, and Genoa gave no doubt, for the time, an impulse towards freedom, but the practice of employing foreign mercenaries checked this tendency and reduced the people to subjection. " In the six-

* Procter's "History of Italy," chap. i.

teenth century Italy could boast of her artists, her poets, her politicians, but of few real patriots, few who rested their own hopes in the independence of their country. The freedom of the old Italian republics had passed away, there was scarcely one that had not surrendered its liberties to a master. The cities were jealous of one another, and torn by intestine factions. Ill fares it with a land which in an age of violence has given itself up to the study of the graceful and the beautiful, to the neglect of those hardy virtues which can alone secure a nation's independence."* A new era has now dawned over the country. The Italians have already proved themselves fit for self-government. Let us hope that the cloud still hanging over their destiny may ere long be dispelled by the flashing power of free institutions.

The character of the Spaniards at one time stood high for bravery, courage, for honour, and for a degree of pride that could brook no insult, and then Spanish chivalry was the touchstone of all that was noble and grand in the character of man. Enjoying thus a high reputation at an

* Prescott's "Philip II.," vol. i.

early period of national existence, to what are we to attribute the present degeneracy of the country? Spain was the leader in the van of modern civilization, and the discovery of the new continent is due to the energy of a native. But the people are essentially indolent, and slow in their operations. "In prosperity the Spaniard is apt to give way to supineness and false confidence; but in adversity, which might overwhelm others, he will often display great courage and surprising resources. He is fond of amusements, dancing and cards being the favourite recreations. Dancing has acquired a national character; and to this day the Spaniard has many an allegorical dance borrowed from the Moors. Music also forms one of their principal amusements, the instrument most generally used being the guitar. They are still attached to the bull-fight, but this cruel amusement is not now so common as formerly."* The Spaniard, from this description, evidently shows no disposition for active life; and hence, with the exception of the bull-fight, there does not seem any national pastime. This, however, is but a barbarous spectacle, and can

* "Encyc. Brit.," art. Spain.

have no influence in producing a love of such sports as invigorate the frame and give manliness to the character. Although formerly the Spaniards could boast of a high standard of warlike courage, Hume, in his *Essays* (vol. i. p. 200) thus sums up their individuality :—" The old Spaniard was restless, turbulent, and so addicted to war that many of them killed themselves when deprived of their arms by the Romans. One would find an equal difficulty at present (at least, would have found it fifty years ago) to rouse up the modern Spaniard to arms." Although not actually serfs, yet they suffer under all the tyranny of ecclesiastical rule, under which they have degenerated until a nation whose power stretched over every quarter of the globe—whose flag was seen in the remotest latitude—now does not even occupy a secondary place among civilized nations, and has been rejected from the great councils of Europe. The modern Spaniard's life is chiefly one of idleness. He displays no energy. The spirit that once delighted in martial exercises has died away—sunk into a slough of superstition, he shows no disposition for sport, nor do manly games form any part of his education. If there is still a remnant

of the ancient spirit it is crushed under the rule of priestly despotism.


The early inhabitants of the vast midland of Europe, when first brought into contact with the Roman Legions, displayed great courage and a noble spirit of independence. Although often overcome in battle they were never entirely subdued, but retained, amid the vast recesses of their forests, their inborn love of freedom. On the withdrawal of the Romans, the States of Germany assumed their former free condition, and with renewed vigour returned to their primitive institutions. When the Germanic empire was founded by the treaty of Verdun, the ancient spirit of the people manifested itself and placed a limit upon the royal authority. For Louis, when chosen as reigning sovereign, was obliged to swear, in a national assembly held at Marone, A.D. 851, that "he would maintain the States in all their rights and privileges." The principle of election was now established; but the great feudatories after a time renounced their allegiance and established themselves in their separate kingdoms. Thus, though originally of one race, the German body became divided—a condition that

tended naturally to produce internal convulsion and weakness. At length from among these States two kingdoms emerged, the kingdom of Prussia and the empire of Austria. In Prussia, after the monarchy had been established by Frederick the Great, the government became unlimited. There was an Assembly, but it seldom met, and the members had no legislative powers, and could make no representation to their sovereign. The education was established entirely upon the military plan, for as every Prussian must serve as a soldier it became necessary to bring him up with that view. He became a moving machine. The consequence of this system is even now manifest. The press is not free; there is a rigorous conscription; a passport system is in full force; and these combined render it impossible that the people should be free. At Berlin "the amusements of the higher classes consist in evening parties, the theatres, concerts, museums, and country excursions with their families, or sporting. The neighbourhood of Berlin affords very good shooting ground. But the sportsmen who frequent it belong to the middle rather than the higher classes." From

this account there does not appear to be any national love of sport, and what there is of it is confined to a class, and that by no means the most influential in the country.

Of the several nationalities that go to make up the Austrian empire, the only one that shows any tendency for sport is the Hungarian, which has also displayed on occasions a manly and war-like spirit. Like the English, the Hungarian is fond of hunting and horse-races; these, however, would appear to have been imported, but the very importation of these sports is characteristic of the people, who would appear to possess a relish for out-of-door pastimes, and thus may be traced in the nation an innate love of freedom, which, although for a long time 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,' seems destined to achieve for itself both national and individual liberty. In parts of Austria there seems to be some popular idea of sport. Rifle-shooting has been for a long time a national practice, but nowhere to the same extent as in the Tyrol, where the inhabitants are bred to the use of the weapon from their boyhood, and at stated times every year the marks men of every village, parish, or valley, meet

to contend for prizes. There is scarcely a village in Austria, the Tyrol, Styria, or Bohemia, without its shooting-ground. The danger and excitement of the chase for the chamois has a peculiar charm for the Tyrolese; they also take particular delight in gymnastic exercises. But though Hungarian and Tyrolese may display a tendency for sport, in the mixture of people in the country known as Austria, those only who are in any way free, display any great passion for it. And we may gather what the condition of the country is even now from the following extract which appeared in the papers during the summer of 1867. At the sitting of the Lower House of the Reichsrath, the motion for the abrogation of the Concordat was brought in. "Notwithstanding strong opposition from the Conservative party, the House adopted the article of the fundamental law affecting civil rights. The law lays down the principle of general admissibility to every public function, liberty of changing domicile, personal liberty, inviolability of correspondence, rights of association, freedom of the press and of tuition, religious liberty, state superintendence of education, equal nationalities and languages." The



very enumeration is a proof of the little way that has yet been made in the direction of freedom.

In contrasting the condition of the smaller with the larger States of Europe, we find that the inhabitants of the smaller States have generally achieved their own liberty; they have all gone through a period of convulsion and have successfully come out of it. The Swiss are not only free in their institutions, but they have bravely stood their ground against all attempts made upon their liberty. They are also passionately fond of sport, displaying an amount of daring and power of endurance in following it up rarely equalled, certainly not excelled. In Holland the people have bravely fought for and obtained their freedom, but instead of sport they have become truly a maritime nation, and to that may be traced their love of liberty and spirit of independence. The inhabitants of the Netherlands have always shown an intense feeling for freedom, which they successfully achieved when they threw off the Spanish yoke. And they have set a noble example to the world by their skill in the useful arts and in their knowledge and practice of agriculture. This freedom of the smaller European States, when the

greater States cannot even now call themselves free, is a curious point in the condition of the world. The causes that have brought this about do not seem so obvious, but the fact is apparent, and forms in itself an interesting problem for solution. According to my view, this is entirely owing to the love of manly and invigorating pursuits displayed among the people. If local circumstances may be said to have assisted to the solution, the innate love of freedom has sustained them in their struggles, or otherwise they must have become absorbed among the surrounding powers.

The early history of Russia, like that of many other countries, is enveloped in obscurity, from which it does not emerge until the middle of the ninth century, when a monarchy was established under Ruric. The present condition of the people is a proof that there never could have been any inherent love of freedom, and as a practical corollary there is certainly no love of sport among them, for "despotism and servitude conjoined seem to be deeply rooted. There is always a principal cause of the distinctive character of a nation. The benefits which result from an in-

stitution always lead the people to adopt its spirit, to make a bad use of it, or conform to its abuses. Spain was subjugated by a hostile religion. It was by religion that Spain achieved its liberation, and fanaticism still rules in Spain. A foreign despotism, that of Central Asia, fettered Russia, which was enfeebled by anarchy. It was by the concentration of power that Russia recovered its independence, and thence despotism established itself without encountering any obstacle.”* If this reasoning may be assumed as conclusive, it will account for the past and present abject condition of the people. In tracing the origin of freedom among nations, it will be found that cities have been the cradle and asylum of liberty. It was thus that a spirit of freedom took root in England; it was thus that the cities of the Netherlands achieved their liberty; it was thus that in Spain itself, after the defeat of the Spanish Arabs, the cities were raised to a standard of freedom which only gave way under the wiles of priestcraft. It was through her independent cities that Italy at one time

* Kelly's "History of Russia" (Bohn's Standard Library), c. xiv.

could boast of any liberty. In Holland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, many of the cities are in reality almost free and independent States. But in Russia, a country of great extent, barren, inhospitable, where the towns were few and far between, where the difficulty of locomotion intervenes to hinder mutual contact and association among the people, there are even at this day but few cities. All power has become concentrated in her capital, and the will of the sovereign is the ruling principle of the empire and the sole law of the State, in which, all alike, of whatever grade in life, are slaves. Under such a system it would be needless to look for any manly sport or pastime. Within these few years, however, the serf has been nominally emancipated ; but ages must pass ere a tyranny so grinding can be blotted out, and the people become free in reality.

Of two nations which at one time had such frequent intercourse and intimate relations with each other, there could scarcely be found a more marked difference of character than between the English and the French. This, no doubt, is in a great degree owing to the difference of race.

The French are derived chiefly from the Celt. The Anglo-Saxon element prevails among the English. The tendency of the one is towards individual freedom. Of the other the individuality is lost in State power. The English have achieved their liberty ; the French seem only to talk of it. The English have found the substance of freedom ; the French have gloriously grasped at its shadow. A strong divergence is maintained in their general characteristics, which has been well expressed by Mr. Cobden in a speech made on being presented with the freedom of the City of London. " Nature has stamped the two peoples with a genius so different that they seem admirably suited to supply each other's wants, and to make good each other's deficiencies : France, with a versatility, a taste, and an ingenuity tending always to the production of articles of luxury and taste ; England, with a solidity, with a perseverance, and a force, aiming to create those articles which enter most largely into the consumption and convenience of mankind. If I were to compare a Frenchman and an Englishman, I should say that while, perhaps, the Frenchman has rather more brains on the tips of his

fingers, the Englishman has more strength in his arm."

In carrying out the view I have taken, that the character of any people is in a great measure dependent on their sports and pursuits, the experience of the past brought down to the present time makes it clear that the French have never shown any predilection for sport of any kind. The country can boast of its forests abounding with objects of the chase, but the sport was for the kings and their followers, not for the people, among whom there seems no attachment to those pursuits of manliness and daring which give a character of independence to the individual. The king and the court occasionally indulged in the sports of the chase, but these were so frivolously ordered that they partook more of the character of a pageant than of sport. For, in the time of Louis XIV., "even the gaities of Versailles were conducted in an orderly manner, so as not to compromise the dignity of a king. Everything was done by rule; and books of etiquette were written laying down the law for every particular of his daily life. The ceremonies attending his going to bed and getting up again in the morning were as

solemn and as stately as those of other people's funerals ; and even the duty of handing the towel to the king to wash was to be performed only by princes of the blood royal, if such were in the room. When he hunted there was no hurry, no hallooing, no scampering. Roads were made through the forest, that the trees might not presume to interfere with the ceremony. He arrived at the place in his coach, and mounted on horseback to a flourish of trumpets. The stag ran and the king followed, but both according to rule ; the spot for the death was already appointed, and there the animal was brought to a stand and slain by the royal hand. Louis then returned to his palace without a curl of his hair discomposed, and ready to proceed with the other methodical and immutable grandeurs of the day."* From the same source I add the following as a sequel to this stupid burlesque of sport :—" It is now clear enough that the condition of France has continued for a long time to depend upon the character of her kings. That the nobles who at one time showed a desire to regain their feudal independence were brought back into subjection to

* " History of France," Chambers' series.

the court by Cardinal Richelieu. That the parliaments, which continued long to be mere royal appendages, have begun to feel some share in the government, and that the people, bandied from one to another, trained to nothing but fighting, and ignorant of the principles of liberty, could take no steps for making themselves heard and felt but by rising in Jacquerie."

Since the terrible Revolution of 1789, the French, having swept away all the landmarks of the past, had the power of asserting and establishing their own freedom, both individually and nationally. What have they done? They travestied every form of government under the names of liberty and equality, until at length despotism came to their relief. But this idol was crushed under the combined action of the nations of Europe. They received again for a while their ancient dynasty, against which they rose and set up in its place a citizen king. He, too, in turn, fled ingloriously. Again was the same farce of liberty and equality played out. And a second despotism has again come to their relief. And what have the people gained? Again liberty and equality—an equality of personal restraint, and

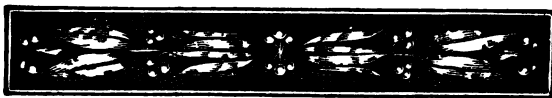
a liberty of thought without action—producing their ever-recurring cycle of discontent and revolution, anarchy and despotism. The popular education leads to no individuality of character. The youth are ever in subjection, and never afterwards seem able to throw off the incubus of early discipline. And thus, instead of an independent character, the well-drilled boy emerges into life a splendid automaton. Such, I maintain, is the natural result of a want of initiation into manly sports in early life. All spirit of independence is thus crushed under the weight of the State machine.

It may be urged that I have taken but a partial view of the subject to bring out in relief those points that are favourable to my views, and keeping back those that are on the other side. To this I will merely answer by appealing to the present condition, as regards personal liberty, of all those countries to which I have alluded. Let us take the great powers of Europe; in none of them is the liberty of the subject understood as we understand it. The conscription, the passport system, the gagging of the press, entire exclusion from all share in the government of their

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country. These conditions, all of them utterly at variance with freedom, are at the root of Continental legislation. The youth are educated under a military system which takes every school and every individual of that school under the control of the State. Not a game nor a pastime exists; there is no rival contest between school and school, nor even among the students of the same school, to give energy and independence of character. Gymnastics are encouraged on the ground, like boxing among the Russians, that they fit the youth better for soldiers, for which all alike are intended. Where is the courage that would excel in the hunting-field? Where are the skill and energy that are required in the game of cricket? Where is the daring that tempts the yachtsman to brave the ocean's storm? These are the elements that form the character of a free people, for which, if we look to the Continent, Echo may indeed answer, Where?





CHAPTER VI.

SPORTS AND PASTIMES.

HUNTING.

THE antiquity of Hunting may be traced back to more than 2600 years before the Christian Era, according to the received chronology. It may, therefore, be fairly conceded that it is one of the earliest sports in which the human race indulged; and one of the greatest compliments paid to the chase is, its having been considered a theme worthy the pens of the ablest writers of the most polished period of the world. The sport was carried out differently in different localities, but the passion for it would seem to have been exhibited in almost every country, and in every age. Among the primitive nations of the East

hunting must be termed a royal sport, for it was confined chiefly to the royal person and his immediate followers. Among the Greeks it formed the pastime of the people, and their mythology has produced many interesting accounts of the chase. I will here, however, refer only to the far-famed Calydonian Boar-hunt, a stirring description of which will be found in the eighth book of the *Metamorphoses*. There is also an allusion to it in the ninth *Iliad*, the interest of which is admirably sustained in Lord Derby's translation.


“Time was that with *Ætolian* warlike bands,
Round Calydon the *Acarnanians* fought
With mutual slaughter. These to save the town;
The *Acarnanians* burning to destroy.
This curse of war the golden-throned queen,
Diana, sent in anger, that from her
Æneus, the first-fruits of his field withheld.
The other gods the *Hecatombs* received:
Diana's shrine alone no offerings decked,
Neglected or o'erlooked. The sin was great.
And in her wrath, the arrow-darting queen
A savage wild boar sent, with gleaming tusks,
Which *Æneus'* vineyard haunting, wrought him harm.
There laid he prostrate many a stately tree,
With root and branch, with blossom and with fruit.
Him *Meleager*, son of *Æneus*, slew.
With youth and dogs from all the neighbouring towns

Collected. Smaller force had not availed.
So huge he was, so fierce, and many a youth
Had by his tusks been laid upon the bier.”*

In reference to hunting, I purpose merely to go back to that period of its history in our own country, so as to connect, as well as I am able, the present passion for the sport with the same intense love for it displayed among the Britons, Saxons, Danes, and Normans; for it has been well observed that, “few things are more permanent, and less liable to change, than national diversions.” Assuming this as an axiom, it may indeed be said, that in no instance could the truth of it be more clearly indicated than in the sport of Hunting. From the time that the Romans left the country, there had been a succession of invaders until the Norman Conquest, each equally fond of the chase. The ancient Briton, from all accounts, was a hunter, partly from necessity, partly for amusement. And as the Roman laws were lenient, for by them wild beasts, birds, and fishes, were considered the property of him who first took them, the Britons, although reduced to subjection, would

* Lord Derby’s “Homer,” book ix. line 619.

probably have been allowed, according to these laws, to follow their game, and appropriate to themselves whatever they took, making use of the sport as a means of subsistence. The Anglo-Saxons brought with them a strong taste for this diversion, in which they freely indulged, and took great pride in it, for not only were the people fond of the chase, but even the lordly Abbots, according to the historian of St. Alban's Abbey, were famed more for their love of apparel, field-sports, and feasting, than of prayer and fasting. The Danish kings were also inveterate huntsmen, and made forest laws, in order to keep in check the Saxons. In the 77th section, "according to the law which Canute, the King of all England, Denmark, and Norway, hath ordained, with the consent of his wise men at London, as well for the maintenance of his own royal dignity, as for the benefit of his people, and were made at Winchester in mid-winter, which, you must note, was one of the stated times when all the great men of the kingdom, both Clergy and Laity, used of course to attend upon the king whether he summoned them or not, liberty is given to every man to



hunt in his own grounds, but forbids all men, under a penalty, to meddle with the king's game, especially in those places which he had fenced by privilege."* The Normans, as is well known, displayed an inordinate passion for the chase, devastating large tracts of land in order to enjoy with greater freedom this their favourite pastime. They abrogated the Roman law of the property being that of the first finder, and instead, forbade the chase to all but themselves, and enforced their edicts by all those severe and cruel enactments which bore so hardly upon the conquered race; but the passion seemed too strongly ingrained in the Anglo-Saxon, who, turning upon his merciless invader, entered into those lawless associations of men who betook themselves to their forests, and defying their oppressors, became at length such a terror to them, that a Norman's life was not safe at their hands. A type of these foresters is well known to every youth in the country, not only in the exciting pages of "Ivanhoe," but in the well-known stories of Robin Hood, and his associates, Little John and Friar Tuck.

* Tyrrell's "History of England," A.D. 1036.

The hunting in practice by the Ancients was by bloodhounds tracking the animals, which were driven into enclosures, or surrounded with nets ; and thus confined within limited space, were shot down and killed by the royal personages and nobles who accompanied them, the people, in large numbers, being merely employed to assist in entrapping the victims. "The modern system of hunting, and that which has been handed down to us by our ancestors, is carried out by hounds following their game, with a great cry and noise, the music of the deep baying of the dogs being increased by the shouts of the huntsmen encouraging the pack in their pursuit, and this is the kind of sport which has now such attraction for the Englishman." It is thus especially a national pastime. In no other country could a similar scene be seen, as is now presented to us at the Covert's side ; here are assembled all the leading inhabitants of the district, the owners of the soil, and the tenant occupiers of the land. There are not a few also who, leaving behind them in the murky purlieus of the City their counting-houses, their warehouses, their desks, nay, even their counters, enter heartily into the

stirring sport, when a southerly wind and a cloudy sky proclaim it a hunting morning. How is it, then, that a sport so dear to the English people, so universally followed up throughout the country, in which all classes join with unusual enthusiasm, should never have taken root among any other nations. There may be hunting on the Continent; the wild denizens of the forests are of course often pursued for amusement, but with a great parade and show, indicating clearly that it is not the sport of the people, but merely of the privileged few. In this country foxes are preserved especially for the sport they afford, otherwise they are mere vermin, and care is taken even to keep up the breed for the purpose. It is this especially that marks the difference between the English and all other people; it is not the mere brutal passion for killing, but a real love for a manly and exciting diversion — the islander's birthright; giving health and strength, yet not altogether divested of that amount of peril in the pursuit, which in the true sportsman adds to its charm.

If we trace this difference, it seems to arise from the different characters of their early in-

vaders. The Goths, the Visigoths, the Huns, the Vandals, who swept over southern Europe with desolating power, imported with them from the far East the principle of despotic rule ; they were the slaves of their rulers, containing within themselves no element of freedom. The inhabitants, so long under Roman dominion, enervated and subdued, were subjected by these to still more domineering rule, and, as in the East, the chase was reserved for the sovereign and his nobles ; so these hordes, breaking loose from their own iron dominion, imported the Eastern system, and kept these privileges of sport for the few, the people merely performing a necessary part in the ordinary pageant on such occasions. The British islands, on the contrary, were invaded by Northmen, who had never known nor felt the iron hand of despotic power ; these enjoyed a state of liberty of which even the subdued natives partook. The king was but the head of his tribe, and although fond of the sport of the chase, yet made no reserve as against the people, who singly entered into the sport for food or diversion. The animals pursued had to be chased and overtaken, hence the value of the dog as a useful and neces-

sary adjunct; and thus we find that the Saxons in those early times prided themselves on their breed of dogs for the chase, the fame of which reached even over the Continent. The Normans, it is true, endeavoured to reserve the Hunting for themselves; but the history of those times informs us also that they were unable to do so. And when the people were freed from the rigour of their laws, all alike partook of the sports. Here was no system of battue derived from the despotic East, and which became the system of the Continent. This was never known in this country; and we are even now obliged to import a word in order to express the thing.

Assuming this, then, as a rational solution of the subject, it will explain at once the cause of the marked difference in the nature of the sport as carried out between the inhabitants of these islands and of the Continent. A difference commenced when England and Europe were alike overrun by barbarians; but by barbarians of diverse origin, one emanating from the dark recesses of Eastern despotism, the other sprung from the cold regions of the north, rejoicing in an inborn love of personal freedom, which

has displayed itself not only in the manners and customs, but especially in the active amusements of social life. That this was the system of the chase, even during the Norman time, is clear from the circumstances attending the death of William Rufus, who was evidently enjoying the sport alone, as his body was not discovered for some time. The king went to divert himself in the beginning of August, to hunt in the New Forest—which in the English Saxon is called Ytene—where he met his death. “A monk, it seems, the night before, had dreamed that he saw the king gnaw a crucifix with his teeth, and that as he was about to bite off the legs the image spurned him to the ground; there as he lay grovelling in the earth, there came out of his mouth a flame of fire, with abundance of smoke. This being related to the king in the morning, he made a jest of it, saying, This monk would fain have something for his dream—go, give him a hundred shillings, but bid him look he dream better dreams hereafter.”* The inference to be drawn is the personal application of the dream. It was intended as a warning not to pursue his

* Tyrrell's "History of England," vol. ii. p. 107.

sport, and the solitariness of the incident is strictly applicable to the habit of enjoying the diversion without the retinue that accompanied the Continental sovereigns on all similar occasions, when it would have been almost impossible that such an accident could have occurred.

The system of hunting as at present practised, when every county has its pack or packs of hounds, would seem to have been adopted about the beginning of James I.'s reign, although regular hunting was established before that time. "The Book of St. Alban's, so called from its being printed there, contains the first treatise upon the subject of hunting that ever appeared from the press; it is, however, evidently compiled from two previous tracts, the earliest of them originally written in French by William Twici, or Twety, grand huntsman to king Edward II.; the other was written by the master of the games to Henry II., for the use of Prince Henry, his son, and is little more than an enlargement of the former tract. The Book of St. Alban's is said to have been written by Juliana Barnes, or Berners, the sister of Lord Berners, and prioress of the nunnery of Sopewell, about the year

1481. Of the animals of the chase, they were divided by some into three classes, distinguished as beasts for hunting, beasts of the chase, and beasts which afford 'greate dysporte.' By others the division was into two classes, in which they are merely marked as beasts of sweet flight, namely, the buck, the doe, the bear, the reindeer, the elk, and the spytard, which is described as a hart one hundred years old; and beasts of stinking flight, which are the fulemart, the fitchat or fitch, the cat, the grey, the fox, the weasel, the marten, the squirrel, the white rat, the otter, the stoat, and the polecat. The wolf is not mentioned, having been previously exterminated.**

A curious account is given of a boar hunt in 1140, in Eskdale, Yorkshire. "Three gentlemen, William de Bruce, Ralph de Percy, and Allotson, did meet in Eskdale side, with their hounds and boar-staves, and there found a great wild Boar, and the hounds did run him very hard near the chapel and Hermitage of Eskdale side, where there was a monk of Whitby, who was an hermit, and the boar being so hard pressed took in at the chapel door and there laid him down and

* Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes."

died immediately. The hermit shut the hounds out of the chapel ; the Gentlemen came and found the Hounds round the chapel. They called on the Hermit, who did open the door, and within, the boar lay dead, when the gentlemen in a fury because their hounds were put out of their game, run at the Hermit with their boar-staves, whereof he died. Being thus liable to death, they sought sanctuary ; but the hermit before he died forgave them on certain conditions of penance which were to be observed on every Ascension Day.”* This account shows at that early time the custom of following the hounds on foot. The following is an extract from a steward’s accompt book found in the noble old mansion of Orchard Portman, near Taunton, in Somersetshire. “ 10th August, 1680 : delivered Sr William in the higher Orial going a hunting with the Judges £2 Os. Od.”† From this, therefore, it appears that in those days buck-hunting, for there could be no other kind of hunting meant, was in so much repute and so much delighted in, that even the judges could not refrain from

* Hone, vol. i. p. 1379.

† Hone, vol. iii. p. 34.

partaking in it when on their circuits, and it seems they chose to hunt their own venison, which they annually received from Orchard Park at the time of the assizes.


The chase is now confined to stags, foxes, and hares. "The first real pack of foxhounds established in the west of England, was by Thomas Fownes, Esq., of Stepleton, in Dorsetshire, about 1730. These were sold to Mr. Bowes, in Yorkshire, the father of the late Lady Strathmore, at an immense price; they were taken into Yorkshire by their own attendants, and after having been viewed and much admired in their kennel, a day was fixed for making trial of them in the field, to meet at a famous hare cover near. When the huntsman came with his hounds in the morning, he discovered a great number of sportsmen who were riding in the cover, and whipping the furzes as for a hare; he therefore halted, and informed Mr. Bowes that he was unwilling to throw off his hounds until the gentlemen had retired and ceased the slapping of whips, to which his hounds were not accustomed, and he would engage to find a fox in a few minutes if there was one there. The gentlemen sports-

men having obeyed the orders given by Mr. Bowes, the huntsman, taking the wind of the cover, threw off his hounds, which immediately began to feather, and soon got upon a drag into the cover, and up to the fox's kennel, which went off close before them, and after a severe burst over a fence country, was killed to the great satisfaction of the whole party. They then returned to the same cover, not one half of it having been drawn, and very soon found a second fox, exactly in the same manner as before, which broke cover immediately over the same fine country; but the chase was much longer, and in the course of it the fox made its way to a nobleman's park. It had been customary to stop hounds before they could enter it, but the best mounted sportsmen attempted to stay the Dorsetshire hounds in vain. The dogs topped the highest fences, dashed through herds of deer and a number of hares without taking the least notice of them, and ran into their fox and killed him some miles beyond the park. It was the unanimous opinion of the whole hunt that it was the finest run known in that country.”*

* Hone, vol. iii. p. 35.

From this account it is clear that hunting was a sport very generally followed, but it would appear that hares were very frequently the object of the chase. Also from this description we find that hounds were trained to follow foxes only ; but it is added, that "before this pack was raised in Dorsetshire, the hounds that hunted Cranbourne Chase hunted all animals promiscuously, except the deer, from which they were necessarily kept steady, otherwise they would not have been suffered to hunt in the chase at all."

This description might be taken as referring to a fox-hunt even at the present day, and shows at all events that more than a century ago hunting was a favourite diversion, and pretty generally diffused among all classes. Such as it was then, such it is now. Noblemen, gentlemen, judges, and clergy, are found among its most ardent supporters. The covert's side is the common ground where all classes meet to enjoy an exciting sport, requiring energy, courage, and nerve, and moreover manly in its character, and invigorating to the health. The covert's side renders all equal for the time, tending to produce



that good fellowship throughout the country which is one especial characteristic of the sporting diversions of the Englishman, and for which we may look in vain among any other people in any quarter of the globe. But while enlarging upon the chase, as connected with those who take a part in it, the following narrative presents a very interesting trait of the cunning and instinct of the animal itself.

“ A tame fox at the White Hart, Bridgewater, was brought up from a cub to run in the wheel as a turnspit. One day, through the neglect of his keeper, he escaped, got to Sedgmoor, and made wild work among the geese. The writer of this was out the next morning with Mr. Portman’s dogs, and going towards Borough Bridge, found the glutton under Alfred Stump. The dogs being laid on, Reynard presently passed through the Parrot, and taking by North Petherton, sought the woods above Monkton, but being driven from thence, dashed through the Tone a mile below Newton, and turning northward, passed Kingston, and was for a time lost in the thickets above Buncomb. The scent serving, Reynard was at length uncovered,

mounted the Catherstone hills, descended to Kenniton, and mounted the Stone mountain in Lord Clifford's Park, from whence he was presently driven by the staunch pack. Leaping the pales at Enmore, he took through Lord Egmont's grounds, and getting again into his old track, recrossed the Parrot just below Petherton, and taking slowly along the banks of the river, with the pack in full cry, leaped the fence of Mrs. Francis' (his mistress) garden, and immediately entered the kitchen, darted into the spit-wheel, and began to perform his domestic office with as much unconcern as if he had been placed there for that purpose. The fat cook, with whom he was a great favourite, spread the place of his retreat with her petticoats, at the same time beating off the eager hounds with all her might and main; but this would have been unavailing if the huntsman had not whipped them off, and after a chase of nearly thirty miles, left this unlicensed poulterer in his domestic occupation."*

The relative position in estimation of the value of the fox now and in former times

* Southey's "Common-place Book," 4th series, p. 370.

is not a little remarkable, for Macaulay writes :—
“The fox, whose life is now, in many counties, held almost as sacred as that of a human being, was then considered as a mere nuisance. Oliver St. John told the Long Parliament that Strafford was to be regarded, not as a stag or a hare, to whom some law was to be given, but as a fox, who was to be snared by any means, and knocked on the head without pity. This illustration would be by no means a happy one, if addressed to country gentlemen of our time; but in St. John’s days there were, not seldom, great massacres of foxes, to which the peasantry thronged with all the dogs that could be mustered, traps were set, nets were spread, no quarter was given, and to shoot a female with cub was considered as a feat which merited the warmest gratitude of the neighbourhood.”*

A work lately published, entitled “Memoirs of the Belvoir Hounds,” and dedicated to, his Grace the Duke of Rutland, gives a very interesting account of the pack :—“The Belvoir hounds, whose chronicles it is my aim to collect and present to the reader in as concise a form as

* Macaulay, vol. i. p. 149.

possible, have been handed down in an uninterrupted descent from the year 1750, and probably from a much earlier period, to the present time. They have always been in the possession of the Rutland family, and the greatest care and attention has, for at least a century, been bestowed on them. Bred from all the best packs in the kingdom, their lineal descent never having been broken or interrupted, having, moreover, for seventy years been under the control of huntsmen acknowledged to have been the best of their day, can it be doubted that the Belvoir hounds possess as much excellence and intrinsic merit as any pack can hope to attain to?" In 1757, in the time of the third Duke of Rutland, called John of the Hill, there is a list of the number of hunters kept, and names of the owners then hunting with the Belvoir hounds. The number of horses kept was two hundred and ninety, a proof that in that day the hunt was a popular one.

Early in the present century the Belvoir were crossed with the Duke of Beaufort's hounds, which were at that time an established pack of fox-hounds. "Henry, the second Duke of Beaufort, kept hounds. His journal begins in

1729; they were all harriers till 1734, then deer-hounds were added, and in that year there were thirty and a half couples of harriers, and six couples of deer-hounds; in 1742 there were twenty-one and a half couples of harriers, and twenty couples of deer-hounds; in 1743, no harriers, thirty-two and a half couples of deer-hounds, and one couple of fox-hounds—Thunder and Giddy; in 1744, thirty-three couples of deer-hounds, and one couple of fox-hounds.” It is evident from this that fox-hunting was not the original sport with hounds, but hare and deer hunting. About 1750, hounds began to be entered solely to fox, and from that time fox-hunting became the favourite sport of the country, owing, no doubt, to the fact, that a fox chase is far more spirited and exciting than any other kind of hunting. There are some interesting particulars given in the work, on the boundaries of counties, so that one hunt should not interfere with another, for which purpose agreements were drawn up between the parties, with almost the formalities of regular legal proceedings. A record of Mr. Noel, of the Cottesmore hounds, shows that from 1766 fox-hunting was the only

recognised sport. It will be evident from this outline that there is a very essential difference between what is called hunting on the Continent and the sport as developed in this country. Every county has its pack, many of them supported by subscription, and kept up at an expense which is of essential benefit to the localities. Thus it is that the sport is not confined, as on the Continent, to royalty, or even to the aristocracy, but is supported chiefly among the people themselves, and especially by the middle classes and yeomen, who are extensive breeders of horses. I have often heard the late Duke of Wellington, than whom no man ever possessed a greater insight into human nature, say that England would rue the day when her field-sports were abandoned, and that amongst his best Peninsular officers were those who had most distinguished themselves in the hunting-field, courage and decision being the necessary attributes of success in the chase.

There is another view to be taken of the sport of hunting, which I think cannot fail to be of interest : it is the amount of good done by the circulation of money, which it produces throughout the country. According to Colonel Cook, the

cost of a pack of fox-hounds varies according to the number of dogs, and the number of days in each week they are hunted. Twenty-five couple to hunt twice a week costs £1190; forty couple to hunt three times a week, £1625; and fifty couple to hunt four times a week, £1936; and if a huntsman is kept, £300 a year more. Now, according to a statement in the *Field* newspaper, the number of packs kept is about two hundred and thirteen; this multiplied into the several sums stated above as to the cost of keeping hounds will give a very large aggregate amount circulated throughout the country, to say nothing of the money spent by those who hunt with the several packs, the purchase of horses, the number of men employed, and the incidental expenses incurred in keeping up the entire business of hunting. All these items together form a no inconsiderable sum freely disbursed, and which cannot fail to benefit the whole country. The hunting man may therefore fairly lay claim to be doing some little good to others even while enjoying for himself a manly and invigorating sport, and upon which no charge can be laid of an evil tendency, such as has been imputed to other sports.



CHAPTER VII.

HORSE-RACING.

IF there is one sport that more than any other can be considered as belonging peculiarly to this country, horse-racing may fairly lay claim to the distinction. Not only is it a national sport, but it is that of all others which truly characterises the Englishman. If Frenchmen are congregated in any locality, a theatrical performance would be a necessary condition of their existence. If Spaniards are gathered together a bull-fight would display the national tendency. Let but a few Englishmen assemble in any quarter of the globe, and it may be safely predicted that a horse-race would be organized, thus indicating at once the popular passion. The spirit of this sport pervades indeed all classes. It is a common subject of conversa-

tion. The pedigree of every thoroughbred horse is curiously scanned, the qualities of sire and dam are the subject of anxious inquiry, and the performances of each animal assign to it its special relation to other animals, and also its pecuniary value ; large sums are made up in support of the institution, which from early spring to late autumn forms the charm and solace of the Englishman's life.

As regards modern horse-racing, it is a curious fact that it owes its origin to the very commonplace process of horse-selling. The first indication, says Strutt (p. 40), of a sport of this kind occurs in the description of London, written by FitzStephen, who lived in the reign of Henry II. He tells us that horses were usually exposed for sale in West Smithfield, and in order to prove the excellency of the most valuable hackneys and charging steeds, they were matched against each other. His words are to this effect: " When a race is to be run by this sort of horses, and perhaps by others which also in their kind are strong and fleet, a shout is immediately raised, and the common horses are ordered to draw out of the way.

Three jockeys,* or sometimes only two, as the match is made, prepare themselves for the contest—such as being used to ride, and know how to manage their horses with judgment. The grand point is to prevent a competitor from getting before them. The horses on their part are not without emulation; they tremble and are impatient, and are continually in motion—at last the signal once given, they stride, devour the course, hurrying along with unremitting velocity. The jockeys, inspired with the thoughts of applause and the hopes of victory, clap spurs to their willing horses, brandish their whips, and cheer them with their cries.”

“It is certain,” adds the same author, “that

* Mr. Borrow, in his introduction to the “Gypsies of Spain,” says: “The English gypsies are constant attendants at the race-course. What jockey is not? Perhaps jockeyism originated with them, and even racing, at least in England. Jockeyism properly implies the management of a whip, and the word jockey is neither more nor less than the term, slightly modified, by which they designate the formidable whip, which they usually carry, at present in general use among horse traffickers under the title of jockey whips. Most etymologists derive it from jackey, a diminutive of the Scotch term Jock or Jack—John, primarily a boy that rides horses.”—From *Notes and Queries*, First Series, No. 2, vol. vii. p. 456.

horse-races were held upon various holidays at different parts of the kingdom, and in preference to other pastimes." The sport, thus in its origin sprung from the people, was upheld and supported by the free and independent action of the burgesses of towns ; for the earliest account I can find of a regular horse-race is as follows, although Camden states that in 1607 there were meetings near York, and the prize was a small golden bell : "In Anno Domini 1609, Mr. William Lester, mercer, being mayor of Chester, Mr. Robert Ambrye, ironmonger, being sometimes sheriffe of this cittie, upon his own coste did cause three silver bells to be made, of good value, which bells he appoynted to be runne for with horses on St. George's day upon the Roode Dee from the new tower to the netes, there torning to run up to the watergate, that horse which came first there to have the beste bell, the second to have the second bell for that year, putting in money and for to . . . and shureties to deliver in the bells that day twelve-month, and the winers had the money put in by those horses that runne, and the use of the bells : the other bell was appointed to be run for

the same day at the ringe upon the like conditions. This was the first beginninge of St. George's race, to which charges, it is said, Mr. Ambrye had some allowance from the cittie."

This continued until the year 1623, "in which yeare Mr. John Brereton, a worthie famous citizen of Chester, then mayor of Chester, altered the said race to run from beyond the new tower and so round the Roode Dee, and the bell to be of greater value, and a free bell, to have it freely for ever, which shall winne the same, to the which he gave liberally, and caused the ould bells with more money to be put out in use, the which use should make the free bell yearly for ever there to be runne for on St. George's day for ever."* The prize of bells appears to have originated in a bell being substituted for a ball given as a kind of acknowledgment from the saddlers to the drapers of Chester. A bell was also the prize for the horse-race, and hence arose the adage, 'bearing the bell.'

A somewhat different account is to be found in the "Quarterly Review," vol. xlix. p. 38, which is in itself interesting:—

* G. Ormerod's "History of Chester," vol. i. p. 299.

“In the reign of James I. private matches between gentlemen, then their own jockeys, became very common in England: and the first public race meetings appear at Garterley, in Yorkshire; Croydon, in Surrey; and Theobalds, on Enfield Chase, the prize being a golden bell. The art of training was now also commenced. James patronized racing; he gave £500—a vast price in those days, for an Arabian, which was of little value. Charles I. excelled in horsemanship. According to Boucher, in his “Survey of the Town of Stamford,” the first valuable public prize was run for at that place, in Charles I.’s time—viz., a silver and gilt cup and cover, of the estimated value of eight pounds, provided by the care of the aldermen for the time being. In 1640 races were held at Newmarket; also in Hyde Park, as appears from a comedy called the ‘Merry Beggars, or Jovial Crew,’ 1641: ‘Shall we make a fling to London, and see how the spring appears there in Spring Gardens, and in Hyde Park to see the races horse and foot?’ The wily Cromwell was not altogether indifferent to the breed of running-horses, and with one of the stallions in his stud, Place’s White Turk, does

the oldest of our pedigrees end. Charles II. was a great patron of the race-course. This monarch was likewise a breeder of race-horses, having imported mares from Barbary and other parts, which were called Royal mares. One of these mares was the dam of Dodsworth, bred by the king, and said to be the earliest race-horse we have on record whose pedigree can be properly authenticated. James II. was a horseman. When he retired to France, he devoted himself to hunting, and had several first-rate English horses always in his stud. William III. and his queen were also patrons of horse-racing. Queen Anne's consort, Prince George of Denmark, kept a fine stud—Curwen Bay barb and the Darley Arabian appeared in this reign. George I. was no racer. He discontinued the silver plate as prizes, and instituted the king's plates, being one hundred guineas paid in cash. George II. cared as little for racing as his father. In his reign the Godolphin Arabian appeared, the founder of our best blood. George III., although not a lover of the turf, gave encouragement to the national pastime. In the fourth year of his reign, however, Eclipse was

foaled, and from that period may English racing be dated. George IV. outstripped all his predecessors in his passion for racing, and was the owner of many first-rate horses."

To horse-racing, however, an earlier date has been assigned, but not, I think, as an organized sport, which differs a little from the preceding one:—"In 1121 the first Arabian horse on record was imported into England. The Crusades were the means of introducing a large number of Eastern horses from the Levant. The traffic in horses now began to assume much of its future character, and Smithfield was established as a horse-market. Edward II. improved the breed of English horses by procuring cavalry horses from Lombardy, Italy, and Spain, and heavy draught horses from Flanders. In the reigns of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. it became common to import foreign stallions from Barbary and Spain. From Henry VIII.'s reign may be dated the improvement of the breed, by the admixture of what we call blood. James I. pursued the system, and by importing from Barbary a set of the finest mares, then known significantly as the Royal mares, greatly assisted

the general purpose. Regular race-courses were now established, and racing was conducted and confined within rules. Charles I. encouraged these sports. Even the fanaticism of Cromwell gave way to it, for he also had a stud of race-horses. The Restoration gave an impetus to racing. The Arabian blood was resorted to, and from that time to the present, by a judicious mixture of crossings of the native with the Arab blood, we now stand unrivalled among nations.”*

Evelyn gives the following interesting account of the importation of some Arabs in 1684:—

“Early in the morning I went into St. James’s park to see three Turkish or Asian horses newly brought over, and now first showed to his majesty. There were four, but one of them died at sea, being three weeks coming from Hamburgh. These were taken from a bashaw, at the siege of Vienna, at the late famous raising that leaguer. I never beheld so delicate a creature as one of them was—of somewhat a bright bay, two white feet, a blaze, such a head, eyes, ears, neck, breast, belly, haunches, legs, pasterns, and feet, in all regards beautiful and propor-

* “The Field Book—Art. Horse.”

tioned to admiration ; spirited, proud, nimble, making halt, turning with that swiftness and in so small a compass as was admirable. With all this so gentle and tractable as called to mind what I remember Busbequius speaks of them, to the reproach of our grooms in Europe, who bring up their horses so churlishly as makes most of them retain their ill habits. They trotted like does, as if they did not feel the ground. Five hundred guineas was demanded for the first, 300 for the second, and 200 for the third, which was brown. All of them were choicely shaped, but the two last not altogether so perfect as the first.”*

Horse-racing, then, not only has been but is a national pastime, and so widely spread is it through the country, that it would be rare to find among the mass of the people any who do not take an interest in it. The three great races of the year are held respectively at Newmarket, Epsom, and Doncaster ; although other localities may now boast of having achieved a racing name. Newmarket owes its celebrity as a place of special meeting to Charles I., although races

* Evelyn, vol. ii. p. 201. 1684.

would appear to have been held there previously, for "It is said that the first races which took place there, were occasioned by the arrival of some Spanish horses, which had escaped the wreck of the Spanish Armada. James I. erected a hunting-seat here, called the 'King's House.' It was rebuilt by Charles II., who was a great patroniser of the turf, and a constant visitor at the races; he was the first monarch who entered horses and ran them in his own name. In March, 1683, when he and several members of the royal family were down there to witness the races, a tremendous fire broke out, which consumed a great part of the town. It has been supposed that the defeat of the Rye-House Plot may be attributed to this accident, as it occasioned the company to depart at a different hour to that calculated upon by the conspirators."* Hume says, "The house in which the king lived at Newmarket took fire accidentally, and he was obliged to leave that place eight days sooner than he intended. To this circumstance his safety was afterwards ascribed when the conspiracy was detected, and the court-party could

* Clarke's "Gazetteer."

not sufficiently admire the wise dispensation of Providence.”*

The race course, formed on an extensive heath in Cambridgeshire, in the immediate vicinity of the town, is four miles in length, and one of the finest in the kingdom; the training ground is also very fine. Previously to 1753, when the Jockey Club purchased the present racing ground, there were only two meetings in the year for the purpose of running horses; there are now six. There are two courses at Newmarket, the Beacon and the Round Course. It was over the latter that Mr. Osbaldeston rode his celebrated match against time.

The doings at Newmarket spring meetings may be said to influence the racing of the year. Besides other well-known stakes, those of the Two Thousand Guineas and One Thousand Guineas have especial reference to the year's running, for the first generally brings out the horses which, as three-year olds, here make their appearance, and upon their performance is supposed to depend their qualification as competitors for the other great races at Epsom and Doncaster. The One Thou-

* Vol. viii. p. 187

sand Guineas is especially for fillies, and has the same influence on the "Oaks" as the Two Thousand on the "Derby," a name now of world-wide fame. The town of Epsom owed its celebrity at one time to its saline springs; many resorted thither to drink the water. Pepys in his Diary (vol. iii. p. 189) says, "To Epsom, by eight o'clock, to the well; where much company, and I drank the water: they did not, but I did drink four pints." "The principal cause of the celebrity which it now enjoys is the races, which are held twice a year on the Downs in the vicinity. The first are in the week preceding Whitsuntide, and the latter, which have been but lately established, in October. When these races were first held periodically we have not been able to trace with accuracy, but we find that from the year 1730 they have been annually held in the months of May and June, and about, previous to which the Hunters' Stakes were occasionally run for on the Epsom race-course, at one of which, in 1730, the celebrated horse Madcap won the prize, and proved the best plate horse in England."*

With reference to the races, we have no

* Allen's "History of Surrey and Sussex," p. 28.

precise account of their origin, but there is a vague but not improbable tradition that it was coeval with the residence of James I. at the Palace of Nonsuch in the early part of the seventeenth century. They would seem to have been continued at irregular intervals; and Clarendon acquaints us that in the year 1648 a meeting of the Royalists was held on Banstead Downs—by which name the Epsom Downs are occasionally referred to in old documents—‘under the pretence of a horse race.’ In Pepys’ Diary (vol. ii. p. 197) of date 1663, this name also appears: “Having intended to go to Banstead Downes to see a famous race, I sent Will to get himself ready to go with me, but I hear it is put off because the Lords do sit in Parliament to-day.” This is somewhat of a contrast to the proceedings of the present day, when certainly the Lords do not sit in Parliament on the great race day, nor yet even the faithful Commons. Since the year 1730 these races have been continued annually; but prior to 1779, when the Oaks Stakes were established, the prizes were confined to plates, which were run for in heats, the common practice at that period. To provide for the

payment of these plates, voluntary subscriptions were entered into, as well by the owners of booths on the Downs, as by others who derived benefit from the meetings—a custom which led ultimately to certain charges being made by the lord of the manor for his permission to erect temporary buildings there during the race times.”

For a considerable period the races were held both in spring and autumn, and it was then customary to commence the sport at eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and when the first or second heat was over, the company usually returned into Epsom to dinner, after which they again assembled on the Downs, and the races for the day were finished. This arrangement, however, gave place to the present system, under which the spring races are held annually on the Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday immediately before Whitsuntide, except when Easter Monday occurs in March, in which case, in pursuance of certain regulations for holding the principal races in the kingdom, they are held in the first or second week following Whitsuntide. The principal stakes run for on the

Epsom course are those called the "Oaks" and the "Derby." The latter deriving its name from that great patron of the turf the late Earl of Derby, and the former from the Oaks, his seat in Surrey.

"There is no social event of annual occurrence within any district in this country that can bear comparison with the great Olympic gala on Epsom Downs on the Derby Day. A century ago the journey from London to Epsom occupied twelve or fourteen hours, and during a great portion of the winter, the roads in the vicinity of the latter place were almost impassable for carriages; but the facilities for travelling existing at the present time has far outrun all previous experience, and thousands and tens of thousands can now congregate in a few hours upon any particular spot near the metropolis, although in the 'olden times' it would have required as many days to effect the same object. Hence during the races, independently of the multitude of pedestrians that visit the Downs, almost every kind of equipage, from the four-in-hand coach down to the humblest vehicle that industrial art can supply, may be seen upon the race-ground, and the vast assem-

blage of spectators is usually composed of every rank and degree of society, even from royalty itself to the lowest grade of human existence. The excitement is so great that during the race week Epsom has the appearance of a busy and crowded city, and all the accommodations which the surrounding country can supply are put into requisition for the multitudes that pour into the town at every inlet. From eighty to one hundred thousand persons, and even more, are computed to have been congregated upon the Downs to witness the races on a Derby Day. At the present time it is customary to commence the races about one o'clock, and to conclude them between the hours of four and five o'clock."*

The following is an interesting account of the Oaks and Derby. "Since the reign of James I., who founded the Epsom meeting during his residence at Nonsuch, its immediate locality has been regarded as classic ground by our race-loving public. In the little parish of Woodmansterne is Lambert's Oak, formerly an inn, but latterly a place of some interest to our

* Brayley's "History of Surrey." (A.D. 1841.)

Jockey Club, since it gave the name to the famous Oaks Stakes at Epsom races. The house, which stands high and commands very fine views, was erected by a society called the Hunters' Club, under a lease from the Lambert family. It afterwards became the residence of the unfortunate Lieutenant-General Burgoyne, from whom it passed to the eleventh Earl of Derby, whose grandson, Edward Smith Stanley, the twelfth earl, much improved it. Here was given, on the 9th of June, 1774, in anticipation of the marriage of Lord Stanley with Lady Betty Hamilton, the celebrated fête champêtre, the first of the kind in England, under the superintendence of Lieutenant-General Burgoyne. On May 14th, 1779, Edward Smith Stanley, the twelfth Earl of Derby, originated the famed Oaks Stakes, so named from his sylvan retreat at Woodmansterne. The first winner of the Oaks Stakes at Epsom was Bridget, a bay mare foaled in 1776, the property of the earl. Bridget was of royal blood, got by King Herod out of Jemima. In the following year, 1780, the earl started the Derby Stakes, so named out of compliment to its noble founder. The first winner

of the Derby Stakes was Diomed, a chestnut horse foaled in 1777, bred by the Hon. Richard Vernon, of Newmarket, and sold to Sir C. Bunbury, Bart. Diomed was got by Florizel, out of the Spectator mare, dam of Pastorella, Fame, &c. After the death of the Earl of Derby in 1834, the Oaks estate was sold to Sir Charles Grey, and has since passed to its present proprietor, Joseph Smith, Esq.**

The three great events of the year in racing are the Two Thousand Guineas at Newmarket, the Derby at Epsom, and the St. Leger at Doncaster, and betting is freely made as to any one horse winning the three events; this has been done more than once, and of course the individual animal becomes at once a great racing celebrity. "At one season of the year, namely, in the autumn, Doncaster is visited by nearly all the families of rank in the north of England. About a mile from the town, on the road to London, is its famous race ground, on which is a stand erected by the corporation, which may well deserve to be styled magnificent, and which, when crowded with company, as it rarely fails to be at the

* "Notes and Queries," 3rd Series, vol. iii. p. 251.

annual meeting, presents a sight truly splendid. Of the origin of this meeting little that is satisfactory is known. Like many other things, it probably grew up from small beginnings—beginnings so small as to pass unobserved by their contemporaries. The earliest notice Mr. Hunter had seen of this meeting occurred under the date 1703, when the corporation voted that the mayor should subscribe four guineas a year for seven years towards a plate to be run for on Doncaster course. At the expiration of the seven years, the vote was extended to five guineas annually. On the 27th of July, 1716, the corporation voted 5*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* towards a plate to be run for on Doncaster Moor, to be called the Town's Plate, provided the neighbouring gentlemen would subscribe for a valuable plate to be run for on the same moor.”*

With regard to the name of St. Leger, as connected with the Doncaster races, some interesting information is contained in the “Notes and Queries:”—“St. Leger is the family name of the Lords Doneraile, of Ireland, and to this

* Allen's “History of the County of York,” vol. iii. p. 193.

Colonel St. Leger probably belonged. The name appears in the *London Gazette* for October, 1793: 'Lieutenant-Colonel St. Leger, of the first Foot Guards, appointed Deputy Adjutant-General to the Forces on the Continent under the Command of the Duke of York.' And in the same official document, John St. Leger, of the 16th Dragoons, is one of the newly-made colonels. In the '*Gentleman's Magazine*,' February, 1800, is the following account: 'Died at Madras, Major-General St. Leger, Colonel of the 80th Regiment of Foot, and Commander-in-Chief at Trincomalee. He rode out in the morning, and returned in apparent good health, but had scarcely dismounted, when he was seized with a convulsion fit, which carried him off in a few minutes.' These extracts, from their dates seem to point not only to one and the same person, but that he was the associate of George IV., who, as Prince of Wales, was then in the prime and pride of life.'"* A further account states that "John Hayes St. Leger was born July 23, 1756. His genealogy will be found in '*Archdall's Irish Peerage*' (*vide* Doneraile). The marriage

* "*Notes and Queries*," 1st Series, vol. x. p. 95.

of his parents is thus recorded in the 'Gentleman's Magazine' (vol. xxiv. p. 387): 'July 24th, 1754, John St. Leger, Esq., married the Hon. Miss Butler (daughter of the governor of Limerick, and niece of Lord Lanesborough)—40,000*l.* fortune.' The same periodical mentions his appointment as Lieutenant-Colonel of the 1st Foot Guards, October, 1782, when only twenty-six years of age; and on the Prince of Wales attaining his majority, he was appointed Groom of the Bedchamber in his household. In 1790 he was returned to Parliament for Okehampton; and February 25, 1795, he was gazetted as a major-general in the army. And on the marriage of the Prince of Wales he was appointed Governor of Ceylon. His death is chronicled in the 'Gentleman's Magazine,' as also in the 'Asiatic Annual Register' for 1800, which refers it to the latter part of 1799." "This gentleman formerly lived at Grangemellon, near Athy; his castellated gate-house still exists, as well as gardens, fish-ponds, bowling-alley, &c. The house has long since been dismantled. He belonged to an extraordinary set of men who flourished in this kingdom about 1770 to the time of the Union.

Colonel St. Leger (or Sallenger), commonly known as Handsome Jack, was one of the bucks, and had many confrères in the district—Old Bagenal, county Carlow, Buck Whaley, Jerusalem Whaley, and many others, who passed their lives in all sorts of extravagances, hard drinking—in fact, gave us the national character of ‘wild Irish.’ The peasantry here believe that he often drives in a coach and four. The coachmen and footmen are headless, and also the horses. Some of the parties have even seen the cavalcade, and will not pass by Grangemellon after dark.”* In carrying on this account it is stated—“Certain it is that the name of this famous race at Doncaster, so familiar in our mouths, was derived from the famous Colonel St. Leger, but whether he founded the sweepstakes, or it was only called after him in compliment to such a celebrity on the turf, I cannot discover. In the corrigenda appended to ‘Burke’s Landed Gentry’ (1st ed. p. 379), I find the following: ‘(Major) General John St. Leger, commonly called Handsome Jack St. Leger, was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel in the first Regiment of


* “Notes and Queries,” 2nd Series, vol. viii. p. 225.

Guards, 5th September, 1787. He was the intimate friend of his late Majesty King George IV. when Prince of Wales, and his Royal Highness the Duke of York, and was subsequently commander of the forces in India (Ceylon?), where he died on service."

The following account is from the *Manchester Guardian* of 15th September, 1859:—"The St. Leger race was instituted in 1776 by the late Colonel St. Leger, of Park Hill, near Doncaster; but it was not until two or three years afterwards that it was called the St. Leger, at the suggestion of the then Marquis of Rockingham, at a dinner at the Red Lion, at that time the head inn of Doncaster, in compliment to the gentleman with whom the race originated. When the contest first came off there were only six subscribers, and five horses ran, the winner being Allabúcalia, who was the property of the above-named nobleman, and was ridden by J. Singleton, a filly by Surly coming in second. In a few of the succeeding years there was an increased number of nominations; but in 1785 the interest in the St. Leger appeared to have considerably fallen off, as in that year only five

gentlemen subscribed, and four horses went to the starting post. In 1789, nine animals were entered, six of whom ran, the Duke of Hamilton's colt by Laurel coming in first; but a charge of jostling being proved against Mangle, his rider, the St. Leger was awarded to the second horse, Pewet. The entries at the two succeeding anniversaries were sixteen and fourteen respectively; yet it was not till 1792 (sixteen years after the institution of the race) that the number of the subscribers exceeded twenty. During the present century, however, and especially within the last twenty years, this important event has gained considerably in interest."

This account of the St. Leger is, I believe, the true one. In the *Racing Calendar* the winner of the first St. Leger is given as Hollandaise, in 1778, which was the first year that the race was strictly called the 'St. Leger. But in a note it is stated: "In 1776 a sweepstakes on exactly the same conditions as that which was afterwards named the St. Leger was won at Doncaster by Lord Rockingham's brown filly by Samson; and in 1777 by Mr. Sotheron's Bourbon; but the first St. Leger so called at



the time was won by Hollandaise." Beyond this it is, I think, needless to go. The filly by Samson was named, as before stated, Allabucalia. In this brief account I have confined myself principally to the Newmarket, the Epsom, and the Doncaster races, as being, so far as the public is concerned, the most prominent and popular. There are others equally important to the racing world ; but to allude even to all the now well-known turf localities would lead me beside my purpose, which is to show that our sports are associated with all classes. If at Smithfield and at Chester horse-racing has taken its rise especially from the people, Newmarket may assume its prestige from Royal patronage ; and while the well-known aristocratic name of Derby will be for ever associated with Epsom, the St. Leger shows that landed influence has also had its share in developing our great national sport.

In horse-racing one of the main points is the breeding of the animal, and I believe I may say that the English race-horse owes much to the infusion of Arab blood. By it we have improved our own breed so as to excel even the

original stock, for it is unquestionable that in speed the English racer is far in advance of the Arab, and in endurance quite equal. In a number of the "Edinburgh Review" * a comparative statement is given "of the speed of some English and Arab horses.

	Course.	Time per Half-mile.
Flying Childers. . . .	9st. 2lbs. Round Course	53 secs.
Flying Childers. . . .	9st. 4lbs. Beacon Course	54½ „
The Flying Dutchman	8st. 8½lbs. 2 miles at York	53½ „
Kettledrum	8st. 7lbs. 1½ mile at Epsom	54½ „

Arabs :

Child of the Islands	8st. 7lbs. 1½ mile at Bombay	56 „
Copenhagen	8st. 7lbs. 2½ miles at Bombay	57½ „

In point of speed, then, we may conclude that the race-horse of the present day in no way yields to the most celebrated performers of the last century." And to this it may be added that it does not yield to the Arab. From the same authority I take the following performance of Flying Childers, "who at six years old ran a trial at 9st. 2lbs. against Almanzor, got also by Darley Arabian, over the Round Course at Newmarket, 3 miles 6 furlongs 93 yards, in 6 minutes 43 seconds."

* Vol. cxx. p. 125.

With reference to Flying Childers, the pedigree in the stud-book is as follows: By Darley's Arabian—Betty Leedes by Careless—Sister to Leedes by Leedes Arabian—Spanker—Barb Mare, which was Spanker's dam. I have, however, found another pedigree, which, as it appears in a work of some authority, I will here give, leaving it to others to decide the point. "It has always been received as an axiom that the breed of race-horses in this country owes its present excellence to the early infusion of Arab blood; admitting this to be a fact, the following details in the pedigree of the famous Flying Childers go to show that if the Arab gave speed, strength has been gained by a strain of the cart-horse. I will in this place give one or two extraordinary crosses, that have been tried with a favourable result. The first I shall notice is in the pedigree of the celebrated racer Samson, bred by Mr. Robinson, which won five Royal Plates at six years old, and was sire of Engineer, Bay Malton, Solon, Pilgrim, Tom Tucker, Bishop, and King Priam, all horses that could run well. Samson was got by Blaze, Blaze by the Flying Childers, Childers by Darley's

Arabian, his dam by Hip, grandam by Spark, son of Honeycomb Punch, great grandam by Snake, great great grandam by a cart-horse that covered mares at 2s. 6d. a mare, great great great grandam was Lord d'Arcy's Queen. This information is given by a well-known trainer—the oldest now living—and although the cart-horse is not mentioned in the *Racing Calendar*, or stud-book, he asserts it to be a true pedigree; it is certainly a most interesting and rare circumstance in favour of crosses. Samson won seven Royal Plates, and was never beaten but once. He likewise got many good racers, and among them Bay Malton, that ran against the best horses in England at the time, and never was beat, which shows he was not a chance horse, but that he gained power by a cross of the cart-horse.”*

There are one or two points in connexion with horse-racing which I may here notice, as they have been taken up by their several advocates. One is, “the restoration of the four-mile heats for the Royal Plates,” and the other,

* R Parkinson on the “Breeding and Management of Live Stock,” vol. i. Introduction, p. 19.


“running horses at two years old.” Mr. Dickenson, V.S.,* has expressed himself strongly in favour of the former, for he says: “It is that formerly the Royal Plates of 100*l*. each were given for competition all over England for four-year-old horses carrying 10st. 4*l*bs., and decided in four-mile heats. These prizes were a great inducement to breeders to endeavour to get horses of size and substance, and to keep them when got. Our horses were then the envy of all Europe. These Royal Plates for high weights and long distances brought up our horses to this point of condition; so long as they were so given, so long we kept our supremacy; but by some unfortunate influence the conditions were altered, and lighter weights and shorter distances allowed. From this point I date under my own observation the commencement of the deterioration of our thorough-bred horses, and consequently of those of every-day use.” On the subject of two-year-old racing there may be differences of opinion, but Professor Spooner, in an article on cross-breeding,† expresses himself

* Journal of R. Agric. Soc., vol. v. p. 267.

† Journal of R. Agric. Soc., 2nd series, vol. i. part 1, p. 137.

strongly in favour of two-year-old running, and his views will no doubt have their full weight as coming from authority.

“ Races for two-year-olds may be objectionable or otherwise, and eight-mile gallops may be excellent or cruel, but so long as racing is supported by the public, two and three-year-old races will not be abolished, nor the longer distances restored. Do away with the excitement of the struggle, and by greatly lengthening the race render its finish the slowest part of the contest, and people will be contented to read the result in the newspapers at home. Let us suppose that the racing of two-year-olds was altogether abolished, and the Derby was contended for by four-year-olds, what would be the result. The expense of keeping race-horses would be enormously increased—perhaps to the extent of 100,000*l.* per annum; and after all, even if these innovations could be introduced, they would all fail in their professed object, that of improving the stoutness of the thoroughbred horse.” In a note on this passage Professor Spooner observes: “The system of racing at two years old, whilst it is always trying, and



often fatal to the fore legs and joints of the young animal, does not appear to be injurious to the constitution, for we have numerous instances of famous stud-horses living to a good age, although they have raced thus early."

As regards heavy weights, heats, and long distances, some have not hesitated to characterize such racing as positive cruelty upon the animals, but whether this is the case or not, there is a practical objection to their restoration, which seems impossible to be got over. In the "Edinburgh Review,"* I find it is thus well expressed: "Experience with race-horses shows that their speed is at no time greater than at two years old, and as, of course, it is far more economical to bring a young horse to the post than to keep him like Eclipse till he is five years old, all the great prizes which the turf now presents are contended for by horses of immature age, so that long before a horse approaches his prime there is nothing left for him on the turf to contend for." These views would seem to express all that can fairly be said on either of these points. At all events, running

* Vol. cxx. p. 117.

of two-year-olds is a long-established fact, and four-mile heats with heavy weights having long since disappeared, any attempt at restoration would be difficult if not impossible. Any further discussion of either point would lead to no practical result, and would consequently be useless.

In claiming for horse-racing that it is a purely English sport, I think what I have here advanced shows clearly that the claim may be admitted. It may be traced back to a very early date. Nearly all the English monarchs have patronized the sport, and among the people it may be called a passion, for there are few by whom some interest in it is not displayed. But while assuming its entirely national character, no one can be blind to the many evils to which it has led, but to which it cannot be said that abstractly they are in any way connected with it, for, as a writer truly says, "That there are objections to racing we do not deny, as indeed there are to most of the sports which have been invented for the use of mankind, and few of which can gratify pure benevolence ; but when honourably conducted, we consider the turf as not more objectionable than

most others, and it has one advantage over almost all now in any measure of fashionable repute, it diffuses its pleasure far and wide. The owner of race horses cannot gratify his passion for the turf without affording delight to thousands upon thousands of the less fortunate of his countrymen."* That turf gambling has arisen from horse-racing must be admitted, and to a very alarming extent; but it does not belong to racing as a sport. It does not seem fair, then, to lay the blame wholly there. Whether anything can be done to mitigate the evil seems a question of great difficulty; some have proposed to bring betting within the pale of the law. This would not do away with the fact, it would only occasionally expose different forms of roguery. But the evil consists not in the betting so much perhaps as in the infamous devices resorted to in order to influence the betting. The evil might work its own cure if those in high places would eschew it themselves, and lend no countenance to it in others; but that at present seems an impossible position. Perhaps when the principles of betting are more clearly understood it might deter many

* "Quarterly Review," vol. xlix. p. 448.

from entering upon the career; but alas! the example extends, and, for all practical purposes, the solution seems as far off as ever, for there are so many who depend almost upon the fruits of betting for a living, that any arbitrary attempt to stop it would inevitably prove a failure. But "woe befall the day when Englishmen look lightly on such desperate inroads upon public morals as have lately passed under their eyes at race-courses. Do they lose sight of the fact, that whoever commits a fraud is guilty, not only of the particular injury to him whom he deceives, but of the diminution of that confidence which constitutes the very existence of society?"*

* "Quarterly Review," vol. xlix. p. 440.

A LIST OF WINNERS OF DOUBLE AND TREBLE EVENTS.

A.D.	2000 Gs.	1000 Gs.	Derby.	Oaks.	St. Leger.
1813	<i>Smolensko</i>	—	<i>Smolensko</i>	Music	Altisidora
1817	Manfred	<i>Neva</i>	Azor	<i>Neva</i>	Ebor
1818	Interpreter	<i>Corinne</i>	Sam	<i>Corinne</i>	Reveller
1822	<i>Pastille</i>	Whizrig	Moses	<i>Pastille</i>	Theodore
1823	Nicolo	<i>Zinc</i>	Emilius	<i>Zinc</i>	Barefoot
1824	Schahriar	<i>Cobweb</i>	Cedric	<i>Cobweb</i>	Jerry
1828	<i>Cadland</i>	Zoe	<i>Cadland</i>	Turquoise	The Colonel
1832	Archibald	<i>Galata</i>	St. Giles	<i>Galata</i>	Margrave
1835	Ibrahim	Preserve	Mundig	<i>Queen of Trumps</i>	<i>Queen of Trumps</i>
1836	<i>Bay Middleton</i>	Destiny	<i>Bay Middleton</i>	Cyprian	Elis
1840	<i>Crucifix</i>	<i>Crucifix</i>	Little Wonder	<i>Crucifix</i>	Launcelot
1843	<i>Cotherstone</i>	Extempore	<i>Cotherstone</i>	Poison	Nutwith
1846	<i>Sir Taton Sykes</i>	Mendicant	Pyrthus the First	Mendicant	<i>Sir Taton Sykes</i>
1848	Flatcatcher	Canezon	<i>Surpice</i>	Cymba	<i>Surpice</i>
1849	Nunnykirk	The Flea	<i>The Flying Dutchman</i>	Lady Evelyn	<i>The Flying Dutchman</i>
1850	Pitsford	F. by Slane—Exotic	<i>Voligeur</i>	Rhedycina	<i>Voligeur</i>
1852	<i>Stockwell</i>	Kate	Daniel O'Rourke	Songstress	<i>Stockwell</i>
1853	<i>West Australian</i>	Mentmore Lass	<i>West Australian</i>	Catherine Hayes	<i>West Australian</i>
1857	Vedette	<i>Impérieuse</i>	<i>Blink Bonny</i>	<i>Blink Bonny.</i>	<i>Impérieuse</i>

A LIST OF WINNERS OF DOUBLE AND TREBLE EVENTS—continued.

<i>A.D.</i>	<i>2000 Ga.</i>	<i>1000 Ga.</i>	<i>Derby.</i>	<i>Oaks.</i>	<i>St. Leger.</i>
1858	Fitz-Roland	<i>Governess</i>	Beadsman	<i>Governess</i>	Sunbeam
1862	<i>The Marquis</i>	Hurricane	Caractacus	Feu de Joie	<i>The Marquis</i>
1863	Macaroni	Lady Augusta	Macaroni	Queen Bertha	Lord Clifden
1864	General Peel	Tomato	<i>Blair Athol</i>	Fille de l'Air	<i>Blair Athol</i>
1865	<i>Gladiator</i>	Siberia	<i>Gladiator</i>	Regalia	<i>Gladiator</i>
1866	<i>Lord Lyon</i>	Repulse	<i>Lord Lyon</i>	Tormentor	<i>Lord Lyon</i>
1867	Vauban	<i>Achievement</i>	Hermit	Hippia	<i>Achievement</i>

Winners—2000 gs., Derby, and St. Leger—West Australian. *Gladiator*. Lord Lyons.

2000 gs., 1000 gs., and St. Leger—Crucifix.

2000 gs., and Derby—Smolensko. Cadland, Bay Middleton. Cotherstone. Macaroni.

2000 gs., and St. Leger—Sir Tatton Sykes. Stockwell. The Marquis.

2000 gs., and Oaks—Pastille.

1000 gs., and St. Leger—Impérieuse.

1000 gs., and Oaks—Neva. Corinne. Zinc. Cobweb. Galata. Mendicant. *Governess*.

Derby and St. Leger—Surplice. Flying Dutchman. Voltigeur. Blair Athol.

Derby and Oaks—Blink Bonny.

Oaks and St. Leger—Queen of Trumps.



CHAPTER VIII.

COURSING.

“**T**HE earliest notices of the greyhound, it is probable, are those met with in the ‘Metamorphoses’ of Ovid (i. 533, vii. 781), and in the poem on ‘Hunting’ of Gratius the Falescan. Slight mention of *Canis Gallicus* and his coursing is also to be found in the writings of Martial, Julius Pollux, and Oppian, as well as in the *Cynegeticon* of Nemesian, which appeared towards the close of the third century, where the form of the greyhound and the arts of breeding, rearing, and feeding of this dog, are treated of somewhat at large. It strikes us, however, that our neighbours the French are, to all appearance, but little grateful for, or even sensible of, the honour done them by the greyhound in borrowing his patronymic from their

country, indigenous as he is considered to be to Gaul. Is it not remarkable not only that hare-coursing is but little practised at present in any part of France, but also that the old authors of Gallia offer but little notice of its ever having been a favourite sport there; unless, indeed, the following method practised more than two centuries ago can be so called. 'The French,' says Tuberville, 'use their greyhounds only to set back sets, or recoytes for deare, wolfe, fox, or such like, whereas we here in England do make great account of such pastime, as is to be seen in coursing with greyhounds at deare, hare, foxe, and such like, even of themselves, when there are neyther hounds hunting nor other meane to help them.'"*

Coursing, as a species of the chase, has been especially stated to be of Gallic origin, and as we pursue the general field sports of the country we shall quote what Mr. Daniel says on the subject: "The opulent and luxurious inhabitants of Gaul used to send out good hare-finders early in the morning to those places where it was likely to find hares sitting; they returned to their em-

* Blaine's "Encyclopædia of Rural Sports," p. 558.

players with an account of the number of the hares found, who then mounted their horses, and took out their greyhounds to course them. Not more than two greyhounds were to be run at once, and those were not to be laid in too close to the hare; for although the animal is swift, yet, when first started, she is so terrified by the hallooing, and by the closeness and speed of the dogs, that her heart is overcome with fear, and in the confusion very often the best sporting hares were killed without showing any diversion; she was therefore allowed to run some distance from her seat before the dogs were set after her. The best hares were those found in open and exposed places; they did not immediately try to avoid the danger by running to woods, but, whilst contending in swiftness with the greyhound, moderated their own speed according as they were pressed. If overmatched in speed by the dogs, they then tried to gain ground by frequent turns, which threw the dogs beyond them, making at the same time their shortest way to the covers or nearest shelter. The true sportsman, even in Arrian's time, did not take out his dogs to destroy the hares, but for the sake of

seeing the contest between them, and was glad if the hare escaped, which was never prevented by disturbing any brake in which she might have concealed herself after beating the greyhounds.”*

Whatever may have been the origin of coursing, the sport has now fixed and confined itself to this country. It is not like hunting, a sport for the many, nor like horse-racing, a diversion in which almost the whole nation joins; its great attraction may be said to consist in the beautiful form and swift pace of the greyhound itself. And in days of yore the animal was held in high estimation, so much so that it was considered as a worthy present. Strutt says (p. 12), “The harehound, or greyhound, was considered as a very valuable present in former times, and especially among the ladies, with whom it appears to have been a peculiar favourite, and therefore in a metrical romance called ‘Sir Eglamore,’ a princess tells the knight that if he was inclined to hunt, she would, as a special mark of her favour, give him an excellent greyhound, so swift that no deer should escape from his pursuit.” It must be evident from this account that dogs capable of

* Blaine’s “Encyclopædia of Field Sports.”

pulling down a buck or stag must have been much larger and stronger than those of the present day. Many of the English monarchs were attached to the greyhound. King John would receive such animals by way of payment instead of money for the renewal of grants, fines, and forfeitures belonging to the crown. The following extract proves this monarch to have been exceedingly partial to this kind of dog. A fine paid, A.D. 1203, mentions, "five hundred marks, ten horses, and ten leashes of greyhounds." Another, in 1210, "one swift running horse and six greyhounds."* Edward III. took so much delight in hunting, that when engaged in a war with France, he had in his army sixty couple of staghounds, and as many harehounds. The following is an interesting account of the kind of sport in Edward IV.'s reign. "In the month of July following (A.D. 1462), the king (Edward IV.) rode on hunting into the forest of Waltham, whither he commanded the mayor with certain of his brethren to come and to give attendance upon him, with certain commoners of the city, where, when they were come, the king caused

* Daniel's "Rural Sports," vol. i. p. 412.

the game to be brought before them, so that they saw course after course, and many a deer, both red and fallow, to be slain before them; and after that goodly disport was passed, the king commanded his officers to bring the mayor and his company unto a pleasant lodge made all of green boughs, and garnished with tables and other things necessary, where they were set at dinner, and served with many dainty dishes, and of divers wines good plenty, as white, red, and claret, and caused them to be set to dinner, or he were served of his own; and over that, caused the lord chamberlayne, and other lords to him assigned, to cheer the said mayor and his company sundry times while they were at dinner, and, at their departing, gave unto them of venison great plenty. And in the month of August following, the king of his great bounty sent unto the mayoress and her sisters, aldermen's wives, two harts and six bucks, with a tun of wine to drink with the said venison, the which venison and wine was had at the Drapers' Hall. To which place, at day assigned, the mayor desired the aldermen and their wives, with sundry commoners; and there the venison, with many other

good dishes, was eaten, and the said wine merrily drunken. The cause of which bounty shown by the king was, as most men take it for, that the mayor was a merchant of wondrous adventures into many and sundry countries, by reason whereof the king had yearly of him notable sums of money for his customs, beside other pleasures that he had showed to the king before times.”*

Queen Elizabeth, as is well known, was extremely fond of the chase, and in her progresses large hunting parties were made for her by the nobility, in which she usually joined when the weather was fine. Strutt (p. 14) gives the following description of one: “She very frequently indulged herself in following of the hounds. ‘Her majesty,’ says a courtier, writing to Sir Robert Sidney, ‘is well and excellently disposed to hunting, for every second day she is on horseback, and continues the sport long.’ At this time her majesty had just entered the sixty-seventh year of her age, and she was then at her palace at Oatlands. Often, when she was not disposed to hunt herself, she was

* Fabyan’s “Chronicle” by Henry Ellis, p. 667.

entertained with a sight of the pastime. At Cowdrey, in Sussex, the seat of Lord Montacute, A.D. 1591, one day after dinner her majesty saw, from a turret, 'sixteen bucks, all having fayre lawe, pulled down with greyhounds on a laund or lawn.'"

The derivation of the word "greyhound" has somewhat puzzled etymologists, from whom various surmises and suggestions have emanated. It has been variously spelt—grehounde, greehounde, by Chaucer. Lord Berners writes grayhounde, Junius graihound, Gesner grewhound, Harrington grewnd. These were all supposed to indicate a connexion with Greece.* Strutt (p. 280) gives what must be considered a ridiculous etymon: "The badger was formerly called the 'grey,' hence the denomination of greyhound applied to a well-known species of dogs, on account of their having been generally used in the pursuit of this animal." Such a derivation can only excite a smile, and may be put on a par with the "Antiquary's" notable discovery of the meaning of the letters ADLL, for I believe it may be safely said that the greyhound

* Blaine, p. 556.

could never have been put to such an use as an encounter with a badger. In "Notes and Queries,"* there is given the following solution: "Greyhound. In the 'Gentleman's Recreation,' 3rd edition, 1686, p. 36, I read, that 'the greyhound, called by the Latins *Leporarius*, hath his name from the word "gre," which word soundeth *gradus* in Latine; in English degree; because among all dogs these are the most principal, having the chiefest place, and being simply and absolutely the best of the gentle kind of hounds.' This extract may do very well for an introduction—the attempt at derivation must be at once discarded. In Anglo-Saxon this dog is called 'ren-hound;' *cursorius canis*, from the verb *rennan*, to run after. From this we have at once a prefix denoting speed, and pointing to the remarkable and conspicuous quality the greyhound is endowed with—viz. swiftness. We might say swifthound, which I think comes near to what may prove to be the true etymology of the word. Johnson, Bailey, and Webster quite agree; all they say about it is as follows: 'Greyhound, n. (Sax.) grighound,' offering no

* Fourth Series. Part II. p. 106.

explanation of the prefix *grig*. Herbert Coleridge, in his 'Dictionary of the First and Oldest Words in the English Language,' has the word 'grifhound.' Now what does *grig* really mean? Bosworth, in his 'Anglo-Saxon Dictionary,' simply says, 'grighound, a greyhound,' and refers you to the 'Glossarii Ælfrici,' p. 173, A. 2 B. M., but says nothing whatever about *grig*. The word evidently means something sprightly, brisk, or nimble. Dean Swift says, 'Merry as a *grig*'—a lively little eel is also called a *grig*. In the Irish-English Dictionary, found at the end of Ed. Lhuyd's 'Archæologia Britannica,' we have *grib*-each, a hunting nag, and *grib*, quick. Here I think we have a solution to the difficulty—*grib*hound, *grig*hound, *grif*hound, *grey*hound=*swif*thound."

There have been many other suggestions made, but I must confess none of them appear satisfactory to me. I think we may arrive at a solution of the difficulty by a much more simple process, for it seems to me that *grey*hound is much more nearly allied both as to sound and meaning with the Greek word *αγρευω*, *venatu capio feras*—to catch, to hunt, to take wild animals by

hunting—*αγρευτης* is also used as an adjective in connexion with *κυων*, and then means hunting dog. Now among the ancients I think it may be assumed that the dogs were divided simply into two classes—those that were used for hunting, and those that were not used for hunting. The term “greyhound” is used very early in the history of Gaul, and was applied to hounds that hunted, and were capable of pulling down bucks and other animals; and they were also held in high estimation, as I have already shown—so much so as to be considered very valuable as gifts, even to Royal personages; and in the sport the number of dogs from a very early period was limited to two. This seems to me a much more probable derivation; but I merely throw it out as a suggestion, leaving to others the decision.

“The practice of modern coursing may be dated from the time of Elizabeth—under her auspices it became a fashionable pursuit. Nor has time diminished the hold it took in the regards of the sporting public, to further metho-dize and give stability to its practice. A code of laws was framed by the Duke of Norfolk, himself a lover of the leash, that became the

stock on which the rules observed at coursing meetings were engrafted. From that time it became an organized pursuit, and was very generally encouraged.”* But though the sport became thus one of the recognised diversions of the country, and was established by laws adopted by all coursers and strictly carried out, it was not until the following century that any especial care was taken to improve the breed of dogs—that is, to give them that speed and power which they now possess. “The foundation-stone of the present coursing popularity was laid by the late Lord Orford, and the superstructure completed by the exertions of different amateurs, who have been so individually anxious in the improvement of the breed that it may fairly be concluded to have at length reached the utmost summit of possible perfection; and the pedigrees of the most speedy and celebrated greyhounds now began to be recorded with as much care and precision as the thoroughbred horses on the turf.”† This statement is amply confirmed by Blaine, who says:—“Among the eminent characters

* Blaine, “Enc. of Rural Sports,” 584.

† “Annual Register,” vol. xlv. p. 806. 1804.

who (after the Duke of Norfolk) particularly patronized it was the late Lord Orford, of Houghton Hall, in Norfolk, who lent his whole powers to the promotion and improvement of it; particularly he had in view the improvement of greyhounds—both as regards their form and qualities. He commenced by crossing the breed with the lurcher, and, as we have been given to understand, with the foxhound also; and lastly, with the bulldog. By the first cross he hoped to gain an accession of attention and teachableness. From the diminutive Italian greyhound he reckoned on increased delicacy of skin, lightness of form, and quickness of motion; and, what we deem the most exceptionable cross, with the bulldog, he expected to gain a smaller ear finely-tapered tail, a sleek coat, and a savage determination to kill; and after seven removes he is said to have gained these valuable points.”*

This view of crossing with the bull-dog is also alluded to in Daniel’s “Rural Sports.”† Lord Orford “had strongly indulged in an idea of procuring a successful cross with the bulldog,

* Blaine, “Enc. of Rural Sports,” p. 584.

† Vol. i. p. 504.

and after persevering, in opposition to every opinion, most patiently for seven removes, he found himself master of the best greyhounds ever yet known, possessing the small ear, the rat tail, and the skin almost without hair, together with that innate courage which the high-bred greyhound should have, and retaining which instinctively he would rather die than relinquish the chase. One defect this cross is admitted to have, which is a tendency to run by the nose."

Many dissentients have arisen against this system of crossing, especially with the bulldog. Mr. Thacker, the well-known courser, not only strongly objected to it, but denied even the originality of the idea, stating that Gervase Markham had long before adopted it, and carried it even to excess. But the following careful opinion by Stonehenge seems to me all that is required, who with regard to bulldog crosses says, "There is one point which must be considered in the selection of the cross—namely, whether it is advisable or not to use those breeds which are notoriously crossed with the bulldog. I have already remarked that the high authority of Mr. Thacker is opposed to its employment, and also most of

the Lancashire coursers, including the Derbyshire and Cheshire districts. But my own opinion is certainly inclined to its adoption, and when we know that the most successful coursers at Newmarket, in Wiltshire, and in Scotland for the last twenty-five years, have had recourse to the bulldog, we have strong reason for believing that its employment should not be set aside without further investigation than the above-named gentlemen seem to have given it. The names of Lord Orford, Lord Rivers, Mr. Etwall, Mr. Tyson, and Sir James Boswell, carry conviction with them so far as authority goes. My belief is that the bulldog cross develops the animal courage, and that it also somewhat increases the mental faculties, so that the dog is inclined to run cunning, but not slack. But I am inclined to believe that the bulldog cross will, in most cases, prevent a greyhound from running well through more than two seasons.”*

Of the establishment of coursing meetings, I find that the society formed in 1776 at Swaffham, in Norfolk, by the late Lord Orford, was the first in point of time. “The number of members

* “The Greyhound,” by Stonehenge, p. 228.

is confined to the number of letters in the alphabet, and each member's dogs are named with the initial letters he bears in the club."* The mantle of Lord Orford fell on Lord Craven, the patron and founder of the Ashdown Park Meeting, at Lambourn, in Berkshire, A.D. 1780. Since then, meetings have been established all through the country. Coursing can boast of many high names among those who have both encouraged and entered into the sport themselves. There have also been female coursers who have devoted themselves to the sport. Queen Elizabeth was passionately fond of it. But the name of Ann Richards, a lady of property, living at Compton Beauchamp, near Ashdown Park, in Berkshire, will ever be remembered among those who have thrown themselves into the diversion with the utmost devotion. The following interesting account of this lady is taken from Thacker's "Coursers' Annual :†"—

"As the fame of one more Berkshire lady, much attached to the diversion, must have reached many of our readers, a few anecdotes of

* Daniel's "Rural Sports," vol. i. p. 504.

† Vol. i. p. 268.

her life may not be unacceptable, particularly as to her kennel may be traced some of the best blood which the greyhounds in the earliest period of the Ashdown Club had to boast. Miss Richards, who resided at Compton Beauchamp, near Ashdown Park, in Berkshire, was possessed of considerable advantages of person, complexion, and understanding, and born to the possession of a fine landed estate. It may be imagined, therefore, that this lady was in her youthful days the cynosure of neighbouring eyes, both noble and untitled ; but whether from devotion to the sport of coursing and personal liberty, or not wishing to confide to an individual that love of her species which showed itself to all whom she could oblige or serve, Miss Richards preferred a single life, and passed it at her paternal seat in a manner which a modern fine lady might deem rather monotonous. The remains of the Wig Avenue, as it was commonly called, still exists at Compton. At its farther extremity, the gay gallants of the vale were accustomed to doff their riding wigs, and receive from the bandboxes, which their servants carefully bore in those days on the pommel of the saddle, the grand *péruques*

of ceremony, which had been duly prepared for an attack on the heart of the young heiress. In spite, however, of all the setting of wigs, the obdurate lady could be persuaded to set her cap at no man. Not a day passed during the coursing season, fair or foul, on which this indefatigable sportswoman was not dragged in her coach-and-six to the Downs, where, springing out on her native turf, she coursed on foot for the rest of the morning, sometimes walking a distance of twenty or twenty-five miles. The rest of her time was passed in the judicious management of her own affairs, and the exercise of a substantial hospitality of which man and horse, rich and poor, partook at all times and seasons. No person came to the mansion-house on any errand without the refreshment of a meal and a tankard of home-brewed, an inducement which, when backed by Miss Richards' customary bonus of a shilling to all sick neighbours, considerably increased the list of Sunday patients, who came to be bled by William Carter, the old body coachman, and added to the worthy man's celebrity as a gratis doctor. Honest William's appointments, and those of his five brother-fixtures, stiff with

family lace, were all of the first order, excepting on one memorable occasion, when a supplementary tail which had been contrived to eke out the natural deficiency of a veteran coach-horse, was switched off on the Burford Race-Course during a hot persecution of flies. To drop our digression from this subject in point, Miss Richards carried her love of dogs, and particularly of the long-tailed species, to a height which perhaps our initiated readers alone may be disposed to treat with indulgence. On hiring a cook, her first question was, 'Young woman, do you love dogs?' The qualified answer would be, 'Yes, please your ladyship, in their proper places.' 'Then,' quoth Miss Richards, gravely, 'if you are disposed to stay with me, remember their place in my house is wherever they think fit to go.' In pursuance of this regulation a large ottoman or bed was provided in every sitting-room, the exclusive property of dogs of all descriptions and ages, which seldom forgot the orderly propriety expected of them as a privileged class. At her death Miss Richards consigned her greyhounds and spaniels, together with her personal property, to her adopted child,

Miss M. Watts, directing by her will that the dogs should be taken care of as long as they lived ; and under Miss Watts' protection they enjoyed the true *otium cum dignitate*, some to the age of sixteen or twenty years, enriching the neighbouring kennel of the then Lord Craven with her best blood. This lady wrote an epitaph for her own tomb somewhat descriptive of her taste, and with a cheerful allusion to the sport which she so ardently pursued. A copy was found among her papers, signed by herself as the authoress.

“ Reader, if ever sport to thee was dear,
Drop on Ann Richards' tomb a tear ;
Who, when alive, with piercing eye,
Did many a timid hare descry.
Well skilled, and practised in the art,
Sometimes to find, and sometimes start.
All arts and sciences beside
This hare-brained heroine did deride.
An utter foe to wedlock's noose,
When poaching men had stopt the Meuse.
Tattle and tea ! she was above it,
And but for form appeared to love it.
At books she laughed at, Pope and Clarke,
And all her joy was Ashdown Park.
But Ann at length was spied by Death,
Who coursed, and ran her out of breath.
No shifting, winding turn could save

Her active life from gaping grave.
As greyhound, with superior force,
Seizes poor puss, and stops her course,
So stopped the fates our heroine's "View,"
And bade her take a long adieu
Of shrill so-ho, and loud halloo."*

This little episode in the history of coursing is not only interesting in itself, but is so peculiarly characteristic, that the mere narrative would at once indicate the country where alone such a trait could be known. The only other instance of excessive feminine fondness for dogs that I can find is in the following account, taken from Thacker's "Coursers' Annual" (1850-51, p. 383); but it appears in marked contrast to Miss Richards' attachment, which showed itself in her love of sport, and may certainly be taken as an example of national divergence of character even when displayed by the softer sex. "Wanted a nurse.—The Signora Marchesa Siffanti di San Bartolomei is in want of a young healthy wet nurse. Her services will be required for a small litter of fine English spaniels, thoroughbred, the maternal parent having died while giving them birth. Nurse to reside in the

* Thacker's "Coursers' Companion," vol. i. p. 268.

house. Wages 100 francs per month. Chocolate in the morning; breakfast with the Marchesa; dine with the servants, and sleep with the dogs." This is taken from an Italian journal. Surely coursers need not after this be at a loss to know what to do should their female pets produce more than what they can conveniently nurse.

Speculation has been frequently made as to the relative speed of a greyhound and a race-horse. The following account is interesting as far as it goes :—

"Various have been the opinions upon the difference of speed between a well-bred greyhound and a blood-horse of some celebrity, if opposed to each other for a mile, or for any greater or shorter distance. It has by the best and most experienced judges been thought, that upon a flat, a horse of this description would prove superior to the greyhound for either an extended or contracted distance; but that in a hilly country the greyhound would have an evident advantage." After a variety of suggestions from one quarter or another, without success, the following circumstance accidentally took place :—"In the month of December, 1800, a

match was to have been run over Doncaster course for one hundred guineas ; but one of the horses having been drawn, a mare started alone, that by running the ground she might insure the wager, when having run about one mile of the four, she was accompanied by a greyhound bitch, who joined her from the side of the course, and emulatively entering into competition, continued to race with the mare the other three miles, keeping nearly head and head, affording an excellent treat to the field by the energetic exertions of each. At passing the distance five to four was betted in favour of the greyhound ; when parallel with the stand it was even betting, and any one might have taken his choice for five or ten. The mare, however, had the advantage by a head at the termination.”* It must be evident, I think, that this race cannot be considered a fair trial of speed ; the two animals running neck and neck together, and the horse winning only by a head, would seem to imply that the greyhound was only keeping pace with the horse. The account, however, shows that the speed of the greyhound was

* “Annual Register,” vol. xlvi. p. 817.

quite equal to that of the horse. I subjoin the following, as giving a remarkable instance of canine strength and determination: "Extraordinary leap and accident to the Honourable Grantley Berkeley's greyhound Bang. On Friday last, while coursing a hare at Brecon Lodge, the hare in a straight run made for the gate of a field into a road, when Bang in his full swing cleared the gate, and from where he took off in the field to where he landed in the road was a distance of ten measured yards, or thirty feet. The hare never got out of the road, but was killed about 200 yards from the gate where the leap took place. The pastern joint of the fore leg of Bang gave way, it is supposed, under the force with which he landed in the road, and it is feared his public running is over."





CHAPTER IX.

MISCELLANEOUS RACES.

IN the account of the races of different kinds which I have here collected, the object in view has been to make the selection such as would show some especial characteristic of English life. Every description of race seems peculiar, and, I may say, indigenous to the country; and some that I have found related are of so whimsical a kind, that no one but an Englishman could possibly have hit upon anything so incongruous. Sport is, in fact, a part of an Englishman's existence. From the court to the cottage there is an inherent passion for it, as indicated equally in the aristocratic horse race or coursing as in the rural rat-hunt, which would collect together pell mell all the men and boys of the village for its enjoyment,

and ingenuity is sometimes taxed to turn this national propensity to quaint, and often very amusing incidents. Among the sports of times now long gone by, there was something grotesque, indeed I may say comic. Such are to be found depicted in the plays of Shakspeare, in Hudibras, and other works — the national propensity peeping out under every condition of whim and oddity.

In "Notes and Queries," under the head of popular amusements in 1688, there is a very curious description of a day's amusement, in which even royalty took part:— "Newmarket, March 15. — This day was a race between a horse of Mr. Browne's called *Havestack* and the *Sussex-pool*. They took some short cut to cross a horse, and consequently very soon a great wheel, that at the turning of the horse *Havestack* had the misfortune to come one of his hind legs down in, they were obliged, though it was impossible to be worse, they were obliged to be slow upon the place.

"After the race was ended, the Majesty Charles II. went to see a great battle in cock-fighting. Her Majesty went to stand near the

far as the Coney Warren, and their Royal Highnesses went to take the air upon the Heath.

“After which there was a great bull baiting in the town, whither a great number of country people resorted to play their dogs, which gave great satisfaction to all the spectators.

“About 3 of the clock in the afternoon there was a foot-race between two cripples, each having a wooden leg. They started fair and hobbled a good pace, which caused great admiration and laughter amongst the beholders, but the tallest of the two won by two or three yards.—*The Loyal Protestant.*”*

And an earlier account even shows the passion of the restored monarch for racing:—

“October 9, 1671.—I went after evening service to London in order to a journey of refreshment when the king then was in his coach with six brave horses, which we changed thrice, first at Bishop Stortford, and last at Chesterford; so by night we got to Newmarket, where Mr. Henry Jermain, nephew to the Earl of St. Alban’s, lodged me very civilly. We proceeded immediately to court, the king and all the English

* Second Series, vol. ii. p. 286.

gallants being then at their autumnal sports. Supped at the Lord Chamberlain's; and the next day after dinner I was on the heath, when I saw the great match run between Woodcock and Flatfoot, belonging to the king and to Mr. Eliot of the bedchamber, many thousands being spectators. A more signal race had not been run for many years."*

Quite in contrast with this, and giving an insight into the Italian method of racing, is the following, also from Evelyn's "Diary:"—"We were taken up the next morning in seeing the impertinence of the Carnival, when all the world are as mad at Rome as at all other places; but the most remarkable was the three races of the Barbary horses that run in the Strada del Corso without riders, only having spurs so placed on their backs, and hanging down by their sides, as by their motion to stimulate them; then of mares, then of asses, of buffaloes, naked men, old and young, and boys, and abundance of idle ridiculous pastime."†

The following amusing paragraph is from

* Evelyn's "Diary," vol. ii. p. 63. 1671.

† Vol. i. p. 174.

Parker's London News of Monday, June 3, 1724:—"On Wednesday, in the Whitsun, a race was run at Northampton for five guineas between two bulls, four cows, and a calf. The first were rid by men, and the calf by a boy. The cows threw their riders, and the calf tumbled down with his, and was thereby distanced, so that one of the bulls won the wager before a vast concourse of people."

The following interesting race is in "Notes and Queries:—" "In a MS. diary of Sir Erasmus Phillipps, fifth baronet, of Picton Castle, ob. 1743, I find a curious illustration of the amusements of Oxford men 140 years ago. Sir Erasmus had just matriculated at Oxford, and was employing his leisure in visiting places of note in its vicinity. What he saw upon one occasion, his diary shall relate. 1720, Sept. 19.—Rode out to New Woodstock, seven miles from Oxford; dined at the Bear, 2s. 6d. ordinary. In the evening rode to Woodstock Park, where saw a foot-race between Groves (Duke Wharton's running footman) and Phillips (Mr. Diston's). My namesake ran the four miles round the course in eighteen minutes, and won the race, and thereby his master £1000,

the sum Groves and he started for. On this occasion there was a most prodigious concourse of people returned to Woodstock, when after some refreshment, galloped to Oxford. I fancy the classical dons of Oxford in 1860 would be greatly scandalized by such a revival of the Olympic games in their vicinity.”* The distance and the time mentioned are so extraordinary that I never heard of anything of the kind even among the fleetest of modern runners. It may well indeed challenge any performance of a like kind.

Under the head of seaside sports, in Hone’s “Everyday Book,” there is the following account of a foot-race :—“There is an exhilarating effect in the sea air and coast scenery which inland views or atmosphere, however fine, fail to communicate. On the 25th September, 1825, a gentleman and lady came out of one of the hotels near the Steyne, and, after taking a fair start, set off running round the Steyne. They both ran very swiftly, but the young lady bounded forward with the agility of the chamois and the fleetness of the deer, and returned to the spot from whence they started a considerable

* Second Series, vol. ix. p. 341.

distance before the gentleman. She appeared much pleased with her victory. There were but few persons on the Steyne at the time, but those who were there expressed their admiration at the swiftness of this second Atalanta.”*

Of the races which have taken place by individuals performing feats against time, the most celebrated is that of Mr. Osbaldeston, to ride 200 miles in ten hours. This kind of racing cannot be considered as a trial of speed only, but also of powers of endurance. And this determination to overcome difficulties so often exhibited by Englishmen is certainly not equalled by any similar trials among other nations. In fact I do not think that among any of the people of the Continent would such attempts be made—at all events they have not come under my notice, nor upon inquiry can I hear of any such. I may, therefore, almost assume that the English are the only people who ever set themselves in earnest to perform feats which are extraordinary as showing great powers of enduring fatigue and even danger. It may be said that many of these are mere acts of foolhardiness ; even admitting

* Vol. ii. p. 1257.

this, it proves only that for sport or pastime the Englishman alone is ready to dare and endure what would appal others. The famous Balaklava Charge is an instance of this disposition. Among the feats performed by individuals against time, I will give the following, which is—

“At the Curragh Meeting in Ireland, Mr. Wilde, a sporting gentleman, made a bet to ride against time—viz., 127 English miles in 9 hours. He rode in a valley to avoid too great a current of air, where two English miles were measured in a circular direction. Bets to a considerable amount were laid, and Mr. Wilde himself had near two thousand guineas depending; the knowing ones and the calculators all declared it impossible to be done in the time, and laid the odds accordingly, but so much were they out, and so wonderfully fleet was Mr. Wilde, that he accomplished the 127 miles in six hours twenty-one minutes. Of course he had two hours and thirty-nine minutes to spare. Mr. Wilde had ten different horses. After he had completed the 127 miles, lest there should arise any difference about the measurement, he trotted round

the course twice.”* At the time this feat was done it was no doubt considered a wonderful performance, but it has since been eclipsed by Mr. Osbaldeston’s celebrated match against time of which the particulars are here detailed.

“Mr. Osbaldeston’s Match. This match was made previous to the July meeting, between Colonel Charretie and Mr. Osbaldeston, for 1000 guineas aside; the latter undertaking to ride 200 miles in ten hours in the ensuing Houghton meeting, the number of horses being unlimited.” (Mr. Osbaldeston was forty-seven years old). “The ground was measured over the Round Course, beginning and ending at the Duke’s Stand. The saddles were covered with lamb-skin, and marked with the name of the horses to be ridden, and the order in which they were to be brought to the post. Refreshments and changes of clothing were provided. The latter, however, were not required, Mr. Osbaldeston preferring continuing in his wet clothes to losing time in shifting them. The umpires were Mr. Bowater for Colonel Charretie, and Mr. Thel-luson for Mr. Osbaldeston. The distance was

* “European Magazine,” vol. xx. p. 316, A.D. 1791.

divided into heats of four miles each. At twelve minutes past seven, all the arrangements being completed, Mr. Osbaldeston started. The fifty four-mile heats were performed in seven hours nineteen minutes and four seconds, to which must be added one hour twenty-two minutes fifty-six seconds occupied in mounting, dismounting, and refreshing, total, eight hours forty-two minutes; or one hour and eighteen minutes less than the time stipulated for the performance of the match. The first twenty-four miles were done in fifty-eight minutes; the forty-eight miles in two hours, one minute, five seconds; the sixty miles in two hours and thirty-three minutes; seventy miles in two hours and fifty-nine minutes; eighty miles in three hours, twenty-five minutes, and thirty seconds; one hundred miles in four hours, nineteen minutes, and forty seconds; and one hundred and twenty miles in five hours, eleven minutes, and thirty seconds. At this stage of the match Mr. Osbaldeston proceeded to the stand and lunched, stopping six minutes and twenty seconds. One hundred and thirty-six miles were performed in six hours; and one hundred and sixty miles in

six hours and fifty-seven minutes. All the stop-pages are included in these calculations. If they are deducted throughout the match, it will be seen that the whole distance was done at the rate of about twenty-six miles per hour; Tranby did his sixteen miles in thirty-three minutes fifteen seconds. The weather was unfavourable, a drizzling rain at the commencement increased to a heavy storm, which did not cease till about ten o'clock. Just previous to commencing the forty-eighth round a tremendous storm of wind and rain met Mr. Osbaldeston in the face, and Streamlet, one of the horses, frightened, actually turned round. Mr. Osbaldeston rode from the ground to the town on one of his own hacks, and was loudly cheered."* The number of horses used during the performance was twenty-eight.

I am not aware of this feat of Mr. Osbaldeston's having been exceeded as to speed, if the distance to be gone over is taken into consideration, but the following match against time, although only a quarter of the distance, gives much greater speed in the actual performance.

* "Annual Register," vol. lxxiii. p. 179. 1831.

"On June 27, 1759, Jennison Shafto, Esq., rode fifty miles, upon ten horses, in one hour forty-nine minutes, seventeen seconds. The match was made to ride the distance in two hours, and to be allowed as many horses as he pleased."* This is, indeed, an example of great speed; each horse must have run, upon an average, only five miles, but the pace was at the rate of about twenty-eight miles in the hour. In these three matches it would seem that the bets upon time were made upon the supposition that the riders could not physically perform the task, but in all these expectation was disappointed, and the feats were performed much within the allotted time. In the Curragh match the pace was at the rate of twenty miles an hour, in Mr. Osbaldeston's at about twenty-six miles an hour, but in the third, which is considerably earlier in point of date, the pace, as I have said, was at the rate of nearly twenty-eight miles in the hour.

I will now allude briefly to steeple-chasing, a species of sport which must be characterized as being truly British, but about which there is

* Daniel's "Rural Sports," vol. i. p. 493.

some difference of opinion as to its origin. In an article in the "Edinburgh Review,"*

"A new system of racing has lately sprung up in England, which, however characteristic of the daring spirit of our countrymen, we know not how to commend. We allude to the frequent steeple-races that have taken place in the last few years, and of which it appears some are to be periodically repeated. If those whose land is thus trespassed upon are contented, or if recompense be made to such as are not, we have nothing further to say on that score; but we should be sorry that the too frequent repetition of such practices should put the farmers out of temper, and thus prove hurtful to fox-hunting. We may also take the liberty to remark, that one human life has already been the penalty of this rather unseasonable pastime, and that from the pace the horses must travel at, considerable danger to life and limb is always close at hand. In the last race of this description that came under our observation, we found there were no less than seven falls at fences, in the space of three miles."

* Vol. xlix. p. 437.

Notwithstanding this testimony as to the modern origin of steeple-chasing, a short poem I have met with, describing a steeple-chase, is unquestionably of a much earlier date.

“ In James the First’s reign we find horses at Croydon, in the south, and at Gatherly Common, a little north of Richmond, in Yorkshire, which were then famous for horse-courses.”*

You heard how Gatherly race was run—
What horses lost—what horses won,
And all things else that there was done
That day.

Now of a new race I shall you tell—
Was neither run for bowl nor bell,
But for a great wager, as it befel,
Men say.

Three gentlemen of good report
This race did make—to make some sport;
To which great company did resort,
With speed.

To start them, then, they did require
A gallant youth—a brave esquire,
Who yielded soon to their desire—
Indeed.

They started were, as I heard tell,
With, Now, St. George, God speed you well!—
Let every man look to himsel’,
For me.

* “ Anecdotes of Horse-Racing,” p. 51.

From Sever Hill to Poppleton Ash,
These horses run with spur and lash,
Through mire and sand and dirt, dish dash
All three.

Bay Corbet first the start he got,
A horse well known—all fiery hot;
But he full soon his fire had shot.
What tho'?

For he was out of graith so sore;
He could not run as heretofore,
Nor ne'er will run so any more,
I trow.

Grey Ellerton then got the lead,
A gallant beast of mickle speed;
For he did win the race indeed.
Even so.

Grey Appleton the hindermost came,
And yet the horse was not to blame;
The rider needs must have the shame
For that.

For tho' he chanced to come behind,
Yet did he run his rider blind;
He was a horseman of the right kind;
That's flat.

For when the race was past and done,
He knew not who had lost or won,
For he saw neither moon nor sun,
As then.

And thus this race is at an end,
And so farewell to foe and friend;
God send us joy unto our end.
Amen.

It would have gratified curiosity to know what was the cause of the rider of Grey Appleton becoming blind during the race ; there is, however, no explanation given. Whether it arose from a fall or not, the author evidently shows that he considers the blindness of the rider, however it occurred, as being the cause of the horse losing the race. We must therefore be content with the bare narrative.

“ Steeple-chasing every year appears to be on the increase. But fox-hunters, particularly masters of hounds, do not generally patronise the sport ; it tears up the country, and begets an ill-feeling in the mind of landowners, which is apt to rebound from the steeple-chase to the fox-hunt. The turfite can hardly commend it, for since four-mile heats have been done away with on racecourses as too trying to our horses, what can be said of four miles of racing under heavy weights over a country purposely chosen for its inequalities of ground, its intersections of yawning ditches, desperate leaps, with rivulets deep and wide in which horses have been drowned ? The sport is certainly calculated to try the speed and hardihood of our horses, and the

determined courage and excellent horsemanship of the riders, but it savours strongly of cruelty, and opens a wide door to chicanery and fraud.”*

With regard to feats of endurance, Daniel, in his “Rural Sports,” vol. i. p. 493, gives one or two remarkable instances. “Mr. Sinclair, of Kirby Lonsdale, in Cumberland, for a wager of five hundred guineas, rode his Galloway on the Swifts at Carlisle a thousand miles in a thousand successive hours, A.D. 1701; but in 1758 a similar exploit was performed by a lady in little more than two-thirds of the time stipulated.” Dr. Johnson has made this the subject of the sixth number of his *Idler*, where, after speculating upon the various motives that could have induced her to perform the feat, such as preserving her life or her chastity, bringing news of a victory, or a conspiracy, or love, thus sums up, “Let it be carefully mentioned that by this performance she won her wager; and lest this by any change of manners seems an inadequate or incredible incitement, let it be added, that at this time the original motives of human

* Blaine’s “Enc. of Rural Sports,” p. 369.

actions have lost their influence, and that the love of praise was extinct, the fear of infamy was become ridiculous, and the only wish of an Englishman was to win his wager." The endeavour to throw ridicule upon the performance only recoils upon the author, who, in so doing, only shows his entire want of appreciation of his countrymen's passion for sport, for I think it may be truly said that though such feats are usually done for some wager, yet that the sporting part of the performance has quite as much interest in it as the mere wager-winning.

The following is a literal copy of part of an advertisement from the *Newcastle Courant*, August 28th, 1725:—"To be run for, the usual four-mile course on Rippon Common, in the county of York, according to articles, on Monday the 13th of September, a purse of twenty guineas, by any horse, mare, or gelding, that was no more than five years old the last grass, to be certified by the breeder, each horse to pay two guineas entrance, run three heats, the usual four-mile course for a heat, and carry nine stone besides saddle and bridle. On Tuesday, the 14th, the Ladies' Plate of fifteen pounds' value,

by any horse, &c. Women to be riders, each to pay one guinea, three heats, and twice about the common for a heat."*

In "Notes and Queries" I find this curious announcement:—"A short time since a race between an elephant and some ponies, accompanied by some amateur pedestrians, took place on the Aintree course, which excited some interest."† It is a pity that the result of this race is not given, for the elephant, though unwieldy, is yet capable of shuffling along at a great pace, owing to the peculiar formation and action of the hind legs, and might perhaps have been able to distance his pigmy competitors.

A description of various kinds of races may be found in Daniel's "Rural Sports," indicating not only the stoutness and speed of the horse itself, but also of the courage and endurance of the riders, several of whom were of the gentler sex, but who, on the occasions here mentioned, seem to have shown, not only all the energy, but even the staying powers of the male. "A match was made for a horse to be rode by Mrs. Thornton

* Hone's "Everyday Book," vol. ii. p. 1060.

† Second Series, vol. iii. p. 209.

(wife of Colonel Thornton) against a horse of Mr. Flint's, riding their own weight, for 500 guineas and 1000 guineas bye. The race was over Knavesmire, on the 25th August, 1804, and won by the gentleman, although the odds at starting were six to four and during seven to four and two to one in favour of the lady. The daring challenge so publicly thrown in the face of Mr. Flint, and maintained to his very beard, must be exceedingly animating to every sports-woman, as pointing out so clearly the way to female renown."*

On April 29th, 1745, Mr. Cooper Thornhill engaged to ride three times from Stilton to London in fifteen hours; the performance was—

	H.	M.	S.
From Stilton to Shoreditch Church, 71 miles	3	52	59
From London to Stilton	3	50	57
From Stilton to London	3	49	56

Two hundred and thirteen miles in eleven hours thirty-three minutes and fifty-two seconds, and three hours twenty-six minutes, within the time allowed." The number of horses is not stated, but still as the distance was ridden on

* Daniel's "Rural Sports," vol. i. p. 404.

the high road, the performance must be considered as a very remarkable one.

The following must be considered an instance of great speed, although only kept up for a short distance:—

At the Newmarket first spring meeting, in 1773, a match became celebrated on account of the quick time it was run in. The contest was between Mr. Blake's Firetail and Mr. Foley's Pumpkin, eight stone each, and was run at score, and the hardest race almost ever known, Pumpkin lying at Firetail's girth the whole time, and in coming in, which is scarcely credible, they ran the Rowley mile (one mile thirty yards) in one minute four seconds.*

A good saying has been ascribed to his late Majesty William IV., which, no doubt, when uttered produced some mirth among those who heard it. "It would appear that at a dinner which William IV. gave to the members of the Jockey Club at St. James's Palace, June 9th, 1836, Lord Westminster was boasting of his celebrated horse Touchstone, and offered to back him for a large sum against anything that could

* "History of Horse-Racing," p. 185.

be named in the field. The king immediately caught at the offer with—‘I will accept the challenge, and will name to beat him by a neck.’ The wager was considered as concluded, and his Majesty being called upon to name his favourite, amidst a roar of laughter named the giraffe.”

In the selection here made my endeavour has been to introduce such races as could only have emanated from English soil. It would, I believe, be quite impossible to find in the annals of any other country any similar performance of strength and endurance on the part of the riders, or of speed of the horses. They are therefore essentially characteristic, and exhibit strongly the peculiar sporting habits and enduring powers of the English. I shall conclude this chapter with the following curious announcement, which is to be found in one of the numbers of the *Spectator*, of date September 11, 1711:—“On the 9th of October will be run for on Coleshill Heath, in Warwickshire, a plate of six guineas value, three heats by any horse, mare, or gelding that hath not won above the value of five pounds, to carry ten stone weight if fourteen hands high, if above or under to carry or be allowed weight for inches,

and to be entered on Friday the fifth, at the "Swan" in Coleshill, by six in the evening ; also a plate of less value to be run for by asses, which, though by no means so noble a sport as the other, was, I doubt not, productive of the most mirth."*

* Vol. iii. No. 173.





CHAPTER X.

HAWKING—ARCHERY—SHOOTING.

IT may appear at the first glance that there is no connexion between these several kinds of sport; but I have placed them in one category from this very circumstance alone, that there is a common link that binds them together. Before the invention of gunpowder the sportsman in search of game was obliged to depend upon his skill with the bow, or endeavoured by means of the different kinds of hawk to capture the flying quarry. The bow has been no doubt applied successfully to running game, but the heavy flight of the arrow, so palpable in its passage through the air, could not tell against birds on the wing, although in the following passage it would seem that at one time a very great degree of skill had been attained:—

“ Archery was most successfully used in bird-killing. The perfection of a sportsman was to strike the bill of the bird once with the arrow so as not to wound the body. A short thick arrow with a broad flat end, used to kill birds without piercing by the mere force of the blow, was called birdbolt.”* This certainly would indicate a great amount of skill, quite equalling that which belongs to the gun ; but granting that this feat was ever performed, I apprehend it must have been of rare occurrence. At all events, hawking was the usual method of taking game on the wing, and more used, as affording more sport and a greater certainty of capture.

Hawking has been from a very early period a favourite pastime. Among the potentates of the East it amounted almost to a passion, and the hawks were kept up and maintained at great expense. At one time, too, it was the amusement of all the sovereigns of Europe, and paramount over all other rural diversions. “ Not only did royalty pursue the sport with great ardour, but the nobility were scarcely ever without hawks in their hand, and the several Acts of Parliament in favour of

* Hone's “ Year Book,” p. 1030.

falconry are an evident proof of that high esteem our ancestors had conceived for this noble diversion. Our neighbours in France, Germany, Italy, and all the rest of Europe have seemed to vie with one another who should pay the greatest honour to the courageous falcon. Princes and States were her protectors ; and men of the greatest genius, and most accomplished in all sorts of literature, with pleasure carried the hawk on their wrists. But the Princes of Asia—Turks, Tartars, Persians, Indians, &c.—have greatly outdone us Europeans in the splendour and magnificence of their field parades, both as huntsmen and falconers ; for though the description of flying at the stag and other wild beasts with eagles may be thought a little incredible, yet permit me to assure the reader that it is no fiction, but a real fact.”*

Strutt states (p. 25) that a Latin author, who lived about the fourth century, speaks of the sport, but the account seems very doubtful. Coming, however, down to later times, the invention has been given to Frederick Barbarossa. At all events, hawking as an amusement

* Somerville, vol. i. p. 153.

was discovered abroad, where it became fashionable some time before it was known in this country. The Anglo-Saxon nobility highly esteemed the sport. Alfred the Great is commended for his early proficiency in it, and was even said to have written a treatise on the subject; and Edward the Confessor allotted the whole of his leisure hours to hunting and hawking. The Norman kings generally would appear to have indulged much in the pastime; and it continued to be a favourite diversion until the close of the Tudor dynasty, when it began to be superseded by the musket. Strutt adds:—"Its fall was very rapid. . . . At the commencement of the seventeenth century it was in the zenith of its glory. At the close of the same century the sport was rarely practised, and a few years afterwards was hardly known."

The origin of hawking would appear to be but imperfectly known. In the second volume of Layard's "Nineveh" he states that, upon visiting the ruins of Khorsabad, he found a bas relief, "in which there appeared to be a falconer bearing a hawk on the wrist." "The only trace we can discover of the art as having been practised at an

early period in Europe is from a passage in Pliny, in which he speaks of a particular part of Thrace, where "men and hawks were used to hunt their prey together—the men beating the woods, and the hawks pouncing on the birds they disturbed. As, however, this author does not make any mention of the practice or mode of training hawks, it is impossible to believe that it was an art ever known to the Romans; at any rate, not until quite the latter period of the empire. It might have reached them, as it probably did this and the neighbouring countries, borne on a wave of that mighty human tide, which, receiving its first impulse in the extreme north-eastern tracts of Asia, swept during the fifth century over the Continent of Europe.* In England falconry cannot be traced beyond the reign of Ethelbert, A.D. 860, as Pennant tells us. But there is no record of trained hawks previous to the time of Ethelred, A.D. 866. From that date until the middle of the seventeenth century it was the favourite amusement of all, from the monarch to the page, and one in which the fair sex took particular delight. To such an extent

* "Falconry," by Salvin and Brodrick, p. 2.

was it patronized, that during several reigns very stringent laws were passed for the better protection of the various species of hawks made use of, certain species being at the same time allotted to particular ranks and orders, the highest being alone privileged to carry the most noble birds. "The books of hawking assigning to the different ranks of persons the sort of hawk proper to be used by them, from the eagle, the vulture, and merloun for an emperor, the ger faulcon and the tercel of a ger faulcon for a king, and the faulcon gentle and the tercel gentle for a prince, down to the tercel for a poor man, the sparrow-hawk for a priest, the musket for a holy water clerk, and the kesterel for a knave or servant."* One of the hawking terms is still retained, although under a different meaning. The word mew or mews, which is now applied to stabling, or a place where horses are kept, was, in the falconer's language, merely the name of a place wherein hawks were put at the moulting time when they cast their feathers.

But the sport of hawking was not confined to the capture of birds on the wing only, but

* Strutt, p. 36.

running game also formed a part of the pastime. The hawks were trained to take hares, and the stately stag was sometimes also made the prey of the larger kinds, but then in conjunction with hounds which took part in the sport, as is well described in the following account from Somerville's "Field Sports."*

"The falc'ners shout, and the wide concave rings,
Tremble the forests round, the joyous cries
Float through the vales, and rocks, and woods, and hills
Return the varied sounds. Forth bursts the stag,
Nor trusts the mazes of his deep recess.
Fear hid him close, strange inconsistent guide!
Now hurries him aghast with busy feet
Far o'er the spacious plain; he pants to reach
The mountain's brow, or with unsteady step
To climb the craggy cliff; the greyhounds strain
Behind to pinch his haunch, who scarce evades
Their gaping jaws. One eagle wheeling flies
In airy labyrinths, or with easier wing
Skims by his side, and stuns his patient ear
With hideous cries, then peels his forehead broad,
Or at his eyes her fatal malice aims.
The other like the bolt of angry heav'n
Darts down at once, and fixes on his back
Her griping talons, ploughing with her beak
His pamper'd chine. The blood and sweat distill'd
From many a dripping furrow stains the soil.
Who pities not this fury-haunted wretch
Embarrass'd thus, on every side distress'd—

* Vol. i. p. 157.

Death will relieve him, for the greyhounds fierce
Seizing their prey, soon drag him to the ground.
Groaning he falls, with eyes that swim in tears
He looks on man, chief author of his woe,
And weeps and dies."

The art of falconry cannot be satisfactorily traced in this country since the time of the civil wars, although in Henry VI.'s time "every gentlemanlike man kept a sparrow-hawk, and the priest a hobby, as Dame Juliana Berners teaches us, who wrote a treatise on field sports, and who says it was a divertisement for young gentlemen to manne sparrow-hawks and merlines."* It was practised both on horseback when in the fields and open country, and on foot when in the woods and coverts. "In following the hawk on foot, it was usual for the sportsman to have a stout pole with him to assist him in leaping over little rivulets and ditches, which might otherwise prevent him in his progress, and this we learn from an historical fact by Hall, who informs us that Henry VIII., pursuing his hawk at Hitchin, in Hertfordshire, attempted with the assistance of his pole, to jump over a ditch that was half full of muddy water; the pole broke, and the

* Hone's "Table Book," vol. i. p. 392.

king fell with his head into the mud, where he would have been stifled had not a footman named John Moody, who was near at hand, seeing the accident, leaped into the ditch, released his Majesty from his perilous situation, and so, says the honest historian, 'God of hys goodnesse preserved him.'"* Queen Elizabeth was fond of hawking, but during the Commonwealth sports in general were not countenanced by the Covenanters, and it may be inferred from thence that hawking received a severe check in Cromwell's time, which it never afterwards recovered. Many attempts have been made to revive it, but without success. A relic of the past, however, is still kept up about the Court; for the Dukes of St. Albans have been for ages, and still are, the Hereditary Grand Falconers of England. "The decline of a sport once so generally practised in this country may be attributed to several causes, the principal one having in the first instance arisen from the more frequent use of gunpowder; this and the inclosing of waste lands gave the first blow to the art. A great reaction with regard to the hawks themselves followed,

* Strutt, p. 32.

and in place of the strict protection they used to enjoy, came a most violent persecution. Discarded as allies in the field, they were and are only looked upon as enemies, and the same noble bird which in former days would have rested on a monarch's wrist, is now handed over to the tender mercies of a menial as vermin."*

Archery.

The skill of the Englishman, as displayed in shooting with the bow and arrow, has been remarkable from an early date, although when the use of the long bow first began, is by no means certain. The Anglo-Saxons and the Danes were certainly well acquainted with its use, but it does not appear that they exercised it except for food principally, and occasionally for pastime. The Normans used the bow as a military weapon, and in the ages of chivalry it was considered an essential part of the education of a young man. From the reign of Richard I. to that of Edward III. there does not appear any record of archery, but it must have been extensively practised in this country, or otherwise the victories

* "Falconry," by Salvin and Brodrick, p. 11.

would not have been ascribed to the skill of the English in the long bow. The practice was in consequence much encouraged, for the English youth were commanded to exercise themselves with the bow, and butts were erected for the use of the people at every convenient place in the neighbourhood of the principal towns. The Artillery Company of London, though they have long left off the practice of the weapon, still represents the ancient bowmen or archers. Indeed *artillerie* is the old French term for archery. I do not propose to treat at any length of this sport, for the introduction of firearms has so completely set aside the bow for any really practical purpose that it would be useless to dilate upon it. That the English excelled in shooting with the long bow is matter of history. In the present day archery is practised merely as a pastime, in which both sexes join with equal ardour and perhaps with not unequal skill; but the butts are now placed at distances so much shorter that no comparison of skill could be instituted. Archery can now only be looked upon as a pleasing diversion, giving health and strength, and having the advantage of bringing the two

sexes together in a social pursuit. But even now it is exclusively an English sport, for I do not find any accounts of archery meetings on the Continent, such as are annually held in this country in different localities. In this respect it is strictly national, indicating the love of outdoor amusements and pursuits which is the essential characteristic of the whole English people.

Shooting.

“It has been remarked, that Great Britain is peculiarly the land of sportsmen, the very name being unknown in all other countries. The observation is in a great measure true; if we look around the globe, we find that wherever wild animals are killed for the sake of sport it is mostly by the Englishman. In Sweden the Englishman alone kills the bear for sport. The natives kill it for the sake of reward, or to rid themselves of a noxious neighbour. In Asia, the only sportsman that encounters the royal tiger is the Englishman; the native shekerrie shoots the tiger for profit. There also the buffalo and the boar are hunted by the Englishman alone. In Africa it is the Englishman who

hunts the lion, the hippopotamus, and the giraffe. And in America it is the Englishman, or English settler, who hunts the panther, the bison, and the bear, for sport,—the natives do so from necessity.”*

From the time of the discovery of gunpowder, and the consequent invention of firearms, the gun has gradually superseded all other missile weapons; from being very clumsy and heavy at first, it has now been brought to a great state of perfection, and shooting has in consequence extended as a pastime throughout the world. The English may be considered good shots, but I am not aware that they can be said to excel other nations. If there is any point of excellence, it is in the training of dogs for sport in which Englishmen outdo all other people; and this attention to the training of dogs seems to have commenced early in the career of gun-shooting. Wood, in his “*Athenæ Oxon.*,” says that Robert Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, son of the great Earl of Northumberland, *temp.* Eliz., was the first person who taught a dog to sit, in order to catch partridges. “Dudley must have caught

* “*Enc. Brit.* : ” *Art. Shooting.*

the idea from having seen dogs sit and beg." The dogs of the present day are trained so as almost to display reasoning powers, and but little, comparatively, would or could be effected without the aid of these trusty and well-beloved companions. The breeds required for the purpose are the pointer, the setter, the retriever, and it may be terrier and spaniel too ought to be included in the list. If anything can be advanced for which the Englishman is distinguished, it is in the very business-like way in which the sport is undertaken and carried out. The law lays down the time of the diversion, and the sittings of the National Legislative Assembly are in some degree regulated by the annual recurrence of the sporting seasons. It is thus that shooting exercises an influence on the national character. Who that is at all attached to the sport does not remember in his youthful days the eagerness with which the first of September was looked for? What preparations were made, what a tossing to and fro during the hours of sleep, in order to be up with the lark, or even ere the day dawned. This it is that constitutes the difference between the

English and other nations. Look at the works which yearly appear on the subject. What quarter of the globe is there where the crack of the English rifle is not heard? Neither heat nor cold, nor danger nor difficulties, deter him from roaming through the world wide, with rifle in hand. A foreigner may now and then be found vieing with the islander in the sport, but it is almost inborn in the Englishman, and life would feel lacking without the excitement and pleasure which the rifle and shot-gun afford.

It is curious to find that the art of shooting flying does not date very far back. Pegge, in his "Anonymiana," relates that William Tunstall was the first person who shot flying in Derbyshire. He was paymaster-general and quartermaster-general of the rebel army, and was made prisoner in 1715. Smollett, in his "Sir Lancelot Greaves," mentions it as a wonderful circumstance that the same person (name not mentioned) had been known to shoot dead a crow that was on the wing; and shooting flying is mentioned in the "British Apollo," printed in 1708. It is stated also "that grouse were usually taken by hawking and netting, until

shooting flying was introduced, which is said by Mr. Fosbroke to have been in 1726 ; but at what time the fowling-piece came into use is uncertain, although we learn from Pope that pheasant-shooting was in vogue in Windsor Forest during the reign of Queen Anne.* Shooting, as practised with guns to which flint-and-steel locks were attached, may be said to have risen and fallen with the Georgian era. But it is not only the excellence of the guns, but also the training of dogs, which has spread the love of shooting until it has become one of the most popular of British field sports. This attention to the education of dogs seems almost peculiar to this country ; rarely on the Continent can any be found with the same intelligence possessed by the British sporting dog. This art of training has been practised with great success, and in recording the following most singular account, it will be seen that dogs are not the only animals that have the faculties required for sport.

The annals of shooting are well stored with many and varied kinds of sport, and of accounts of extraordinary feats of skill and daring, and


* "Enc. Brit.:" Art. Shooting.

also with many anecdotes of the sagacity and staunchness of dogs. But that a pig should be found capable of emulating the dog on those very points for which he is most prized seems an extraordinary circumstance, but the following statement will be found, and vouched for by the author, in the work quoted from.* "Of this most extraordinary animal (known by the name of Slut) will here be stated a short history, to the veracity of which there are hundreds of living witnesses. Slut was bred in and was of that sort which maintain themselves in the New Forest without regular feeding, except when they have young, and then but for a few weeks, and was given when about three months old to be a breeding-sow, by Mr. Thomas to Mr. Richard Toomer, both at that time keepers in the forest. From having no young, she was not fed, or taken very little notice of, until about eighteen months old; she was seldom observed near the lodge, but chanced to be seen one day when Mr. Edward Toomer was there. The brothers were concerned together in breaking pointers and

* Treatise on the "Breeding and Management of Live Stock," by Richard Parkinson, vol. i., Introduction, p. xxv.

setters, some of their own breeding and others which were sent to be broken by different gentlemen. Of the latter, although they would stand and back, many were so indifferent that they would neither hunt nor express any satisfaction when birds were killed and put before them. The slackness in these dogs first suggested the idea that by the same method any other animal might be made to stand and do as well as one of those huntless and inactive pointers. At this instant the sow passed by, and was remarked as being handsome. R. Toomer threw her a piece or two of oatmeal roll, for which she appeared grateful, and approached very near; from that time they were determined to make a sporting pig of her. The first step was to give her a name, and that of Slut (given in consequence of soiling herself in a bog) she acknowledged in the course of a day, and never afterwards forgot. Within a fortnight she would find and point partridges or rabbits, and her training was much forwarded by the abundance of both which were near the lodge. She daily improved, and in a few weeks would retrieve birds that had run as well as the best pointer;

may, her nose was superior to any pointer they ever possessed, and no two men in England had better. They hunted her principally on the moors and heaths. Slut has stood partridges, black game, pheasants, snipes, and rabbits in the same day, but was never known to point a hare. She was seldom taken by choice more than a mile or two from the lodge, but has frequently joined them when out with the pointers, and continued with them several hours. She has sometimes stood a jack snipe, when all the pointers had passed by it. She would back the dogs when they pointed, but the dogs refused to back her until spoken to; their dogs being all trained to make a general halt when the word was given, whether any dog pointed or not, so that she has been frequently standing in the midst of a field of pointers. In consequence of the dogs not liking to hunt when she was with them, for they dropped their sterns and showed symptoms of jealousy, she did not very often accompany them, except for the novelty, or when she accidentally joined them in the forest. Her pace was mostly a trot; was seldom known to gallop, except when called to go out shooting.



She would then come home off the forest at full stretch, for she was never shut up but to prevent her being out of the sound of call or whistle when a party of gentlemen had appointed to see her out the next day, and which call she obeyed as readily as a dog, and be as much elated as a dog upon being shown the gun. She always expressed great pleasure when game, either dead or alive, was placed before her. She has frequently stood a single partridge at forty yards distance, her nose in a direct line to the bird. After standing some considerable time, she would drop like a setter, still keeping her nose in an exact line, and would continue in that position until the game moved; if it took wing, she would come up to the place, and put her nose down two or three times, but if a bird ran off, she would get up and go to the place and draw slowly after it, and when the bird stopped she would stand as before. The two Mr. Toomers lived about seven miles apart, at Rhinefield and Broomey Lodges. Slut has many times gone by herself from one lodge to the other, as if to court the being taken out shooting. She was about five years old when her master died, and

at the auction of his pointers, &c., was included in the sale, and bought in at ten guineas. Sir H. Mildmay having expressed a wish to have her, she was sent to Dogmersfield Park, where she remained some years. She was last in the possession of Colonel Sikes, and she was then ten years old, had become fat and slothful, but would point game as well as before. When killed she was at Bassilden House. Slut weighed 700lbs. Her death, to those who possessed common feelings of humanity, appears, if one may use the expression, at least animal murder. It would have cost but a trifling sum to have fed and sheltered her during the winter, and the park would have supplied her wants during summer at no expense." To this account the author appends these remarks:—"This pig seems to have possessed extraordinary qualifications, as, from the account given, she cost very little for keep as a store pig, and not much to fatten, though she attained to so prodigious a weight. It would probably, therefore, be for the interest of breeders to inquire after the breed, as they appear to be a kind of pig that seeks its food in the forest, and produces much profit with little expense or trouble."

From these brief observations it will be seen that these several kinds of sport have a connexion one with the other ; for hawking at one time occupied that rank in British field sports which is now enjoyed by shooting, and the rifle has become the substitute for the bow. " But whether we have improved as sportsmen may be questioned, if we look at the custom now become ' common ' of collecting together within narrow bounds large quantities of game, artificially reared and semi-domesticated, which has tended greatly of late years to destroy the taste for real sport amongst the upper orders, and at the same time to crowd the gaols from the lower ranks of society. No pursuit deserves the title of sport which taxes nothing beyond the organ of destruction in those who follow it. The battue system, in which hundreds of pheasants reared almost by the hand of the keeper, and scores of hares enclosed within nets, are driven into the very faces of sportsmen posted in advantageous situations, and slaughtered by wholesale with the smallest possible expenditure of trouble to the slayers, may be styled in newspaper paragraphs glorious day's sport, but has certainly nothing in common with that de-

scription of sport which brings into play the qualities of energy, perseverance, endurance of fatigue, great self-command, and calmness of nerve in times of difficulty, and which has given to the national character its title to respect, in the sportsman by flood and field at home, and the warrior abroad." A consequence of this wholesale preservation and destruction is, that while game is slaughtered in the one case, all other birds are being massacred under the common title of vermin, and, in addition to this mistaken persecution, all our large and rare birds are fast disappearing under the rage of making what is termed collections in natural history, an object, perhaps, legitimate in itself, but which carried to excess by would-be collectors may soon destroy the balance of nature, and leave us to contend with more subtle and mysterious enemies ; so that we run in danger of becoming vulgar game-killers without sport, and mere bird-stuffers without even the pretence of a necessity for the acquisition of knowledge by a murderous onslaught on all by which that knowledge could be acquired.



CHAPTER XI.

YACHTING.

QF all the sports by which any estimate could be formed of the character of a people, there is not one more truly national than yachting, or taking pleasure and amusement in sailing on the bosom of the heaving ocean. There have no doubt been brave and daring sailors at all times : this was the character of the Phœnicians. The Greeks and Romans were bold and adventurous upon the sea ; but among these, war, rapine, and plunder, or a search after supposed treasure, constituted the chief motive that led to the adoption of a seafaring life. Coming down to more modern times, the Spaniards and Portuguese have shown themselves to be fearless and hardy sailors, and to the Italians formerly must be given the character of being

bold and daring seamen. To an Italian, acting under Spanish patronage and protection, we owe the discovery of the great Continent of America ; to a Portuguese is due the peril and adventure of doubling the Cape of Good Hope. The sturdy Dutchman has established colonies among the fertile islands of the Pacific. Nor have the English been behindhand in taking a share in those maritime discoveries ; but these were undertakings entered upon under national auspices, and with the view of ultimate national aggrandizement. Perhaps, as regards Columbus himself, we may accord high motives arising from a spirit of research and an anxious desire to establish, if possible, a long cherished and deeply studied view of the real formation of the globe. And every praise is due to the spirit and energy with which not only his, but all these other enterprises were brought to a successful issue, notwithstanding the anathema pronounced by the Romish Church against tempting the dangers of the deep. “ For aristocracies and priesthoods hated the sea because civilization, which is destructive of error, was fatal to their authority, and they knew that where there were means of communication there

would be found the germ of improvement ; the ocean thus led to enlarged and enlightened views. The coast line of Italy and Greece was favourable to the intercourse of early navigation, and led to mental development. To the same cause England is indebted for her greatness.”* This is no doubt true, and civilization is in a great degree due to the extended commerce which resulted from the spirit of maritime enterprise. But to follow the sea merely as a diversion—to tempt the dangers of an ocean-voyage from a desire of pleasurable excitement only—this would appear to belong to the English alone, and may have arisen in a great degree from the simple fact that the English are a nation of sea-girt islanders.

This love of a sea life may not have been displayed at a very early period when vessels were small and rudely built, and coasting was the only idea of a voyage on the ocean ; but from the time of the discovery of the magnet, which enabled the vessels to leave the shores, and seamanship assumed a distinct feature of life, we may trace the adventurous spirit of the English sailor. During Saxon times it is true a reward was pro-

* “Penny Magazine,” p. 31. 1837.

posed as an inducement for merchants to tempt the stormy waves, by which commerce was encouraged and the wealth of the nation increased. And Athelstan showed his foresight by raising every merchant who had made three voyages to the dignity of a Thane. But between that time and the establishment of yachting a long space intervenes, during which the progress of affairs connected with the sea was slow and sometimes even doubtful. All the early English sovereigns were adventurous upon the sea, for the constant wars with the continental powers led to the frequent crossing of the channel. The vessels were, however, of no great size, and certainly not well adapted for battling with rough weather. At length, in Henry V.'s reign, we read of a vessel 186 feet in length. Henry VII. built the *Henri Grace à Dieu*, which vessel has been termed the parent of the English navy; and in Henry VIII.'s reign the ship called the *Great Harry* was built, of 1000 tons burden, and carried 40 guns, the utmost carried by any vessel; indeed, in Queen Elizabeth's reign, only four came up to that number; but at all events the conquest of the Spanish Armada showed the metal of the

British sailor of those days—a spirit retained to the times we now live in.

But it is to this epoch that we must refer for the first use of the term “yacht” as a vessel intended for the purpose of amusement, or for conveyance of passengers alone, as distinguished from vessels of war or merchant vessels. And it would appear that we owe both the name itself and the class of vessel it represents to the Dutch. Evelyn, in his Diary, October 1, 1661, has this entry: “I sailed this morning with his majesty in one of his yachts or pleasure-boats, vessels not known among us till the Dutch East India Company presented that curious piece to the king, being very excellent sailing vessels.” But in the preface to “A Collection of Voyages and Travels” (vol. i. p. 29) it is stated that, “the same year, 1598, the Holland East India Company set out six great ships and two yachts for India under the command of Cornelius Hemskirke, which sailed out of the Texel on the 1st of May, and coming together to the Cape of Good Hope in August, were there separated by a terrible storm. Four of them and a yacht put into the Isle of Maurice, east of Madagascar; the other

two ships and yacht put into the Isle of St. Mary, to the east also of Madagascar, where they made no stay, but sailing thence arrived on the 26th of November, 1598, before Bantam, and a month after them came the other four ships and yacht from the Island Maurice." In the same work, under date 1642, it is said that, "Abel Jansen Tasman set sail from Batavia, in the Island of Java, with a yacht and a fly-boat, and September 5th anchored at the Island Mauritius, in 20 degrees south latitude." It is clear from these extracts that the term "yacht" was quite understood at these dates, and was applied to a particular class of vessel, which, according to Evelyn, were considered as pleasure-boats, and said to be also fast sailers; for at the same time other terms are given in these voyages to other vessels, such as caravel, pinnace, spyntan, brigantine, galley, pink, and chaloop, or as it is now written shallop or boat.

Pepys, in his Diary,* makes frequent mention of the word "yacht." In 1660-61, "The king hath been this afternoon at Deptford to see the yacht that Commissioner Pett is building,

* Vol. i. p. 178.

which will be very pretty, as also that his brother is making." In a note on this passage it is said, "In 1604 a yacht had been built for Henry Prince of Wales, by Thomas Pett, to whom the English navy was much indebted in the reigns of the early Stuarts." In vol. i. p. 276, of date 1661, he says: "Before we had dined comes Sir R. Slingsby and his lady, and a great deal of company, to take my wife and I out by barge to show them the king's and duke's yacht. We had great pleasure seeing all four yachts—viz., these two and the two Dutch ones." There is also another passage (vol. i. p. 234, 1661): "And then to Deptford, and so took barge again, and were overtaken by the king in his barge, he having been down the river with his yacht this day for pleasure, to try it; and, as I hear, Commisisoner Pett's do prove better than the Dutch one, and that that his brother built."

The word also appears in Evelyn's "Diary." "It was on a wager between his other new pleasure-boat, built frigate-like, and one of the Duke of York's; the wager 100*l.*: the race from Greenwich to Gravesend and back. The king lost it going, the wind being con-

trary; but saved stakes in returning. There were divers noble persons and lords on board, his majesty sometimes steering himself. His barge and kitchen boat attended. I brake-fast this morning with the king at return in his smaller vessel, being pleased to take me and only four more, who were noblemen, with him; but dined in his yacht, where we all eat together with his majesty.”*

The following is a curious account of yacht-racing in 1773. “Earl Ferrers arrived at Deptford in his yacht from a cruise of about three weeks, which he took in order to make a trial of his new method of constructing ships; and we are informed by a person who has conversed with one of the officers belonging to her, that nothing that ever was built answered all purposes so well, as they say she is not only a fast sailer, but also carries her sail remarkably well, and has every good quality that a vessel can possibly have in the utmost perfection, and more particularly in a large head sea. What is very extraordinary in the vessel is, that in turning up to the windward from the Downs to Blackwall,

* Vol. i. p. 354. 1661.

where she arrived on Sunday evening, she beat every vessel between three and four miles an hour, right in the wind's eye, though there were at least a hundred sail of vessels of different sorts coming up the river at the same time; and what is still more extraordinary, though the wind all the time blew very fresh, and right down the river, yet on Saturday evening she turned from about two miles to the westward of the Isle of Sheppey to the mouth of the River Thames in within four hours against the ebb tide, though at the height of the springs, which it is imagined was never done before, nor can be done by any vessel."* Notwithstanding this account it would appear that this vessel so spoken of was doomed to suffer defeat on this very point of speed, for in the same book from which the account is taken, at p. 620—"In a letter from Dover mention is made of a late trial between the celebrated vessel constructed by Lord Ferrers and two small shallops belonging to Lieutenants Friend and Columbine, when, on a stretch from that port to the opposite coast and back again, his lordship's vessel was weathered full two leagues in

* "Gentleman's Magazine," vol. iv. p. 464.

coming in with Dover cliffs. A vessel launched lately for the captain of the *Speedwell* has since beat the shallops, and is thought to be the fastest sailing vessel on the coasts of the kingdom." These accounts are curious and interesting, as showing that even at that time great attention was paid to the construction of vessels for the purposes of speed; for Lord Ferrers' yacht was at first considered to be the fastest sailing vessel until beaten by the shallops, which in their turn were beaten by the captain of the *Speedwell's* lately built vessel. I cannot trace any further account of these vessels, or it would have been interesting to have known something of their build, size, and rig, and the conditions of sailing.

Although the British people have always been known as lovers of a seafaring life, yet strange, in the construction of vessels of war, the nation has been generally behind others in building. The French had better constructed vessels, and the Dutch even could claim a superiority; but from the time of the Stuarts there were great modifications in ship-building. In Pepys's Diary, May 19th, 1666, he says: "Mr. Deane and I did discourse about his ship *Rupert*, which

succeeds so well, as he has got great honour by it, and I some by recommending him. The king, duke, and everybody say it is the best ship that was ever built; and then he fell to explaining to me his manner of casting the draught of water which a ship will draw beforehand, which is a secret the king and all admire in him, and he is the first that hath come to any certainty beforehand of foretelling the draught of water of a ship before she be launched." This theory of displacement had of course a very great influence in the construction of vessels, and led to great improvement.

The word yacht is from the German. It has been spelt in three different ways: yatch, yatcht, and yacht—the last only being now retained. It is derived from the word jaghte, which is from the verb jaghten, to hunt, to course, to run after, to hasten. In composition it is used thus, jaghteschiff, which literally would be swiftship, or huntship, and probably was applied for the purpose of speed, or for pursuit; and, at all events, is intended to express aptness for speed. In Ogilvie's "Imperial Dictionary," "yacht," described as Dutch jagh, German jacht,

from jagen, is said to be properly a vessel drawn by horses. If this is correct, the word would appear to have been applied first to a kind of despatch-boat on the canals in Holland, and it afterwards came to be applied to swift-sailing sea-going vessels. The word is defined in the German dictionaries as a vessel of one covering or deck (ein verdeck), as single-decked vessels would no doubt possess greater speed than vessels of more than one deck. In the Enc. Britt. a yacht is described "rigged as a Queen's cutter, having a boom mainsail, a foresail, and jib," although upon what authority it is confined to this one kind of rigging does not appear. In the Popular Encyclopædia it is called "a vessel with one deck." In the "Field Book" the definition given is "a small ship anciently used for carrying passengers; a private vessel of pleasure." And in the introduction yachting is thus appropriately spoken of: "While hill or forest bounds the sporting adventurers of other lands, the 'deep, deep sea' is made subservient to the pastimes of Great Britain, and the flag which in war bore 'the battle and the breeze,' in peace sweeps over the blue wave which owns its

power, and would almost prove that the elements themselves cannot bound the sportive enterprise of the true-born Briton." Oddly enough, Strutt, the date of whose work on "Sports and Pastimes" is 1801, makes no mention of the word yacht, and under the word sailing only alludes to some insignificant "above-bridge club," generally known under the appellation of the "Cumberland Society," and among the members of which a silver cup is yearly sailed for in the vicinity of London.

The word yacht does not appear to have come into use, as applied to a particular class of vessel, until towards the end of the sixteenth century, and the first mention of it that I can find is, as I have said above, in the year 1598; and that it was not generally known before that time may be almost determined by the fact that the word is not to be found in Minshew's polyglot dictionary of about the date 1600. And according to Mrs. Cowden Clarke's "Concordance," it does not occur in any of the works of Shakspeare. Johnson asserts that the first use of the word is in Captain Cook's voyages, in the following passage:

“The evening before we met, off the Sound, Lord Sandwich in the *Augusta* yacht.” But I think I have shown conclusively that it was known before that time. In most of the dictionaries it is spoken of as a pleasure-vessel for passengers. In the Oxford Encyclopædia the following is the definition: “A Dutch word, a vessel of state, usually employed to convey princes, ambassadors, and other great personages, from one kingdom to another. As the principal design of a yacht is to accommodate passengers, it is usually filled with a variety of convenient apartments, with suitable furniture, according to the quality or number of persons contained therein.” Although nothing is here said of swift sailing, yet such ought to be a necessary condition of a pleasure vessel, and hence great attention has always been given to the construction of these vessels, in order that they might combine as much as possible speed with comfort; and it is not too much to say that many a lesson has been learnt by the builders of the royal navy and of merchant vessels from the experiments made in the building and rigging of yachts.

The history of yachting must always be con-

nected with its central locality in the Isle of Wight. Cowes has always been reckoned the head-quarters, being admirably adapted from its situation as an anchorage ground for this class of vessel; here is the local habitation of the Royal Yacht Squadron, all the members of which enjoy many privileges, which have been bestowed upon the society at different times, not only from the Home, but also from nearly all the Continental Governments. But the operations of the squadron are not confined to the land-girt waters of Spithead, the Solent, and the Southampton river. The vessels of this, and of the many other clubs which have sprung up in every part of the United Kingdom, are to be found in all quarters of the globe, and the logs of many of the voyages which have been undertaken with so much spirit and energy would no doubt furnish splendid examples of British daring and endurance. I will here recal to recollection a voyage of one which seems to me to give a specimen of true English moral courage, patience, and perseverance, not surpassed in any adventures, or which have been achieved by any other individual whatever. I allude to the *Royalist*, and its owner, Sir J. Brooke.

Sir James Brooke, better known as Rajah Brooke, was the only surviving son of Thomas Brooke, Esq., of the East India Company's civil service; he was born in 1803, and in due course went out to India as a cadet. He was in service during the first Burmese war, in which he was severely wounded. He received the thanks of the Government, but was obliged to return to England in order to recruit his prostrate health. He went out again to India, but shortly after gave up the service, and went to China in 1830. In his voyage thither he saw for the first time the islands of the Indian Archipelago lying neglected and unknown. After carefully studying the subject, he became convinced that Borneo and the eastern isles afforded an open field for enterprise and research; and returning to England set himself to his task of visiting them. Many obstacles were in his way; these he determined to overcome; and purchasing a vessel, the *Royalist*, of the Royal Yacht Squadron, a schooner of 142 tons burthen, he patiently went through the ordeal of preparation, selecting for his crew of about twenty men only, such as he deemed trustworthy, and fit for the work before them.

In 1838 he set sail from England, and after testing for about a year in the waters of the Mediterranean both his vessel and his crew, he continued his voyage to the East, and arrived safely at Singapore in 1839. Sailing thence to Borneo and the Celebes Islands, he had some intercourse with the inhabitants, whom he describes as remarkable people; but he found the country in a disturbed state, which rendered it difficult for him at that time to hold any intercourse with the Dyaks. But he went there for his especial purpose. As he says of himself in his journal, "I go to awake the spirit of slumbering philanthropy with regard to these islands, to carry Sir Stamford Raffles' views in Java over the whole Asiatic Archipelago; fortune and life I freely give, and if I fail in the attempt I shall not have lived wholly in vain." With this object before him, no difficulties were sufficient to deter him, and he patiently abided his time.

Captain Keppel, in his "*Voyage of the Dido*," speaks thus of the character of Sir J. Brooke: "Of the most enlarged views, truthful and generous, quick to acquire and appreciate, excelling in every manly sport and exercise, elegant and

accomplished, ever accessible, and, above all, prompt and determined to redress injury and to relieve misfortune, he was of all others the best qualified to impress the native mind with the highest opinion of English character. How he has succeeded, the influence he has acquired, and the benefits he has conferred, his own narrative best declares, and impresses on the world a lasting lesson of the good that attends individual enterprise when well directed, of which every Englishman may feel justly proud." This personal narrative is singularly interesting, and fully bears out the high estimate Captain Keppel, who was associated with him in many of the early enterprises made in these new and hitherto unexplored regions, had formed of his friend and companion. The sequel is now well known. Sir J. Brooke succeeded in rendering acceptable service to the native chief of the island of Borneo, and received in return, if it may be so termed, a large tract of land, which bears now the name of Sarawak. The important aid he here brought to the civilization of the natives ought not to be overlooked; but the Liberal Government of that time never recognised

him ; indeed, it may be said, refused to acknowledge him. It is true, the government of the island of Labuan was tardily conferred upon him, only, however, to be subsequently taken away, without any corresponding position being conferred upon him, making his position one of great difficulty and peril, still worse than before such an appointment, as it seemed that he had been deserted by those who under the circumstances ought to have rendered him every possible assistance. The whole of this transaction is given in the preface to Sir J. Brooke's private letters by J. C. Templer, of date 1853 : " It may be proper here to correct a misapprehension which has got abroad, occasioned by the tenor of Sir J. Pakington's letter to Sir J. Brooke, relieving him of the Governorship of Labuan, that a want of confidence was shown him by the late administration. The case, however, was quite the reverse, the reduction of the settlement at Labuan, which involved Sir J. Brooke's retirement from the governorship, met with his approval under the then circumstances of the settlement ; but so far from evincing any distrust, the late ministry expressed their continued confidence by appointing

him as a part of the same arrangement to a high ministerial office in the Indian Archipelago, which by the real power it conferred was completely in accordance with his wishes, and the formalities were all but complete, when Lord Derby's ministry retired from office, and their successors refused to confirm the appointment." I will conclude this brief sketch of the career of one of Britain's most deserving sons, too little appreciated, alas! neglected, and I might almost say forgotten now, but who is still struggling to establish the views with which he set out, by giving here his own sentiments of his position, which appear in some remarks he wrote as an introduction to the journal of his nephew, Mr. C. Brooke:"—

"I once had a day-dream of advancing the Malayan race by enforcing order and establishing self-government among them; and I dreamed too that my native country would derive the benefit of position, influence, and commerce without the responsibilities from which she shrinks. But the dream ended with the first waking reality, and I found how true it is that nations are like men—that the young hope more than they fear, and

that the old fear more than they hope—that England had ceased to be enterprising, and could not look forward to obtaining great ends by small means perseveringly applied ; and that the dependencies are not now regarded as a field of outlay to yield abundant national returns, but as a source of wasteful expenditure to be wholly cut off. The cost ultimately may verify an old adage, and some day England may wake from her dream of disastrous economy, as I have awakened from my dream of extended usefulness. I trust the consequences may not be more hurtful to her than they have been to me.

“ Since this I have found happiness in advancing the happiness of my people, who, whatever may be their faults, have been true to me and mine through good report and evil report, through prosperity and through misfortune.”*

The principle of the government of Sarawak is to rule for the people and with the people, and to teach them the rights of freemen under the restraints of government. The majority in the “ council ” secures a legal ascendancy of native

* Introduction to Mr. Charles Brooke's “Ten Years in Sarawak,” by Sir J. Brooke.

ideas of what is best for their happiness here and hereafter. The wisdom of the white man cannot become a hindrance, and their English ruler must be their friend and guide or nothing. They are not taught industry by being forced to work ; they take a part in the government under which they live. They are consulted upon the taxes they pay, and in short they are free men.

This is the government which has struck its roots into the soil for the last quarter of a century, which has triumphed over every danger and difficulty, and which has inspired its people with confidence.

Sarawak has now been recognised as an independent state by America, by England, and by Italy ; and by increasing population, trade, and revenue, she may look forward to maintain her position and extend her influence still further. But to secure permanency she needs the protection of an enlightened nation, to sustain her effort of self-government, and this protection she could repay with equivalent advantages. Failing this object, the past may become a guide for the future, and enable Sarawak to stand alone for the welfare of her people. To show the prospe-

rous condition of this new settlement, under Rajah Brooke's management, I will merely add that during the eleven years from 1854 to 1864 inclusive, the imports have increased from 352,195 dollars to 1,224,435 dollars, and the exports from 319,639 dollars to 1,155,201 dollars.

The *Royalist* was subsequently sold by Sir J. Brooke, but the narrative of its voyage to the East, and subsequent adventures in the Eastern Archipelago, have given an interest to it as showing what has been achieved by the patient daring and endurance of a British yachtsman, an achievement second to none in the annals of nautical adventure. And if any words of mine could induce a recognition by the Government of the great services rendered by Sir J. Brooke in the cause of civilization, at least I shall not have written in vain.

Thus we see to what an extent the habits and pursuits of the nation tended to develop these qualities, which later produced results so ennobling to himself and so advantageous to the country which gave him birth.

Another instance in which a yacht has been

employed in a matter of great service and importance, is the voyage of the schooner *Fox* in search of Sir John Franklin. This vessel belonged to the Royal Yacht Squadron, and was once the property of Sir R. Sutton, by whom it was sold to Lady Franklin, and by her despatched on the last and almost hopeless attempt to discover the remains of the ill-fated expedition which, but a few years before, had gone out with such high hopes and expectations, to achieve, if possible, the great object of all the Arctic voyages, the discovery of the north-west passage. The *Fox* was 170 tons burden, and in order to render her fit for such a voyage, was strengthened by an outward coating of wood, every part being proportionately made strong to enable her to cope with the known dangers of such an undertaking. The vessel was placed in charge of Sir Leopold M'Clintock and Captain A. Young, and started on her voyage on the 30th June, 1857. The incidents of the voyage have been put before the public, so that I should only be making a repetition of what is already well known if I entered upon them. Unfortunately, as it happened, the result was, if I may so say, only partially successful.

A yacht voyage displaying equal courage and endurance, and showing also all the pluck belonging to the English character, was made but a short time ago in a vessel belonging to the Royal Victoria Yacht Squadron, some details of which have been kindly forwarded to me by the adventurous yachtsman himself, Captain Hanham; the simple narrative being of itself most interesting. The *Themis*, formerly the *Titania*, is an iron schooner of about one hundred and forty tons, and was built for Mr. Stephenson, the well-known engineer, under his own supervision, by Mr. Scott Russell. It subsequently came into the possession of Captain T. B. Hanham, who conceived the idea of making a voyage in her to the Sandwich Islands and back. He resolved to pass through the Straits of Magellan, on his way out and on his return homewards to closely investigate, as far as circumstances would permit, the Sarmiento and other channels into the Magellan Straits. Captain Hanham left England on the 17th of April, 1864, with his wife and her attendant, his crew consisting of a chief officer, who had been a lieutenant in the Navy, second mate, carpenter, six able seamen, steward,

cook, and boy—eleven in all. The *Themis* touched at Madeira, Teneriffe, Rio Janeiro, the River Plate, and Port St. Julian, and on the 30th of August rounded Cape Virgin into the eastern end of the straits, clearing them by Cape Pillar at the western entrance early on the morning of the 12th of September. Sailing thence leisurely northwards, he touched at Callao, whence he took his departure for the Sandwich Islands on the 12th of December, with an unbroken distance of over five thousand miles of sea-way before him. Off the island of Massafuera, which lies a little to the westward of Juan Fernandez, Captain Hanning lost his chief officer, and henceforth the command devolved upon himself exclusively, he being perhaps the only person on board possessing the slightest knowledge of the science of navigation, in which it became now a part of his care to instruct one or two of his crew. In forty days Hawaii was made, and here the *Themis* remained from the 22nd of January till the 29th of November, 1865, cruising about all the time among the islands, visiting often every anchorage, munificently entertaining and conveying backwards and forwards to their several destinations,

or as inclination led them, all the chief authorities and inhabitants of the islands.

On the 29th of November, the *Themis* left the islands on her homeward voyage, taking the track to the southward, through the Marquesas group. On the 13th of December, Captain Hanham had the misfortune to lose his steward, and shortly afterwards a more severe, indeed an irreparable affliction fell upon him, in the loss of his most estimable wife, and he was thus left in the midst of the most trying part of his voyage, deprived alas, both of sympathy and counsel in his troubles and of companionship in his desolation.

On the 8th of February the vessel reached Valparaiso, and having thoroughly refitted for the grand feat of his voyage, on the 21st the *Themis* started homewards, by the track indicated before, notwithstanding the unhappy circumstances in which he was now placed, and the sore temptation there was to return at once, to deposit in their last resting-place, the precious remains of his once partner in life, and which he still carried with him. Captain Hanham would not give up his object, depending entirely on himself for the navigation of his yacht, and

justly confident in the character and seamanship of his mate, and in the fidelity, endurance, and zeal of his crew. He now drew up such instructions as were best suited to meet the emergency of anything happening to himself. On the 19th of March, corresponding to the time of our autumnal equinox, Captain Hanham entered the Gulf of Penas and the Sarmiento channel, round Byron's Island, a spot to be recalled to the minds of all readers of voyages and shipwrecks, as that on which the *Wager* was lost from Anson's squadron in 1741. From this date until the 23rd of May, when the vessel cleared the straits, and again rounded Cape Virgin into the South Atlantic, the yacht was involved in this narrow intricate navigation, exploring promising inlets and reported channels, which often proved to be barred, examining anchorages and places for supply, shelter, and security ; ascertaining the existence and correct position of suspected dangers, and certifying known ones, in all cases seeking for, not evading them ; often overrunning or falling short of the intended shelter for the night, compelled to unremitting exertion and anxiety, in frost, sleet, darkness, and storm, and in narrow

winding water for forty-eight hours at a stretch. The captain's own skill, energy, and pluck, nobly seconded by his mate and crew, whose entire confidence in him never for a moment wavered, bringing them through at last without one single mishap, a phase of amateur seamanship well worthy of all the publicity which can be given to it, as indicating the enterprising, and I may say exalted character, of the thorough English yachtsman. Touching at Monte Video, Captain Hanham remained there till the 12th of June, when he quitted for home. The *Themis* reached Falmouth on the 23rd of August, after a most eventful and really important voyage of somewhat more than two years and a half.

Such is a brief account of a voyage which would never have been undertaken by any one but an Englishman, and is indeed only a prominent instance of the national character, a voyage that could never have been successfully carried out but for the untiring energy, perseverance, and entire self-dependence displayed under all the difficulties and trials of the voyage.

I cannot conclude this chapter in a more satisfactory way than by showing the extensive bear-

ing, in both a social and maritime point of view, of the club to which I have the honour to belong. The Royal Yacht Squadron contains 19 steamers, 64 schooners, 27 cutters, and 12 yawls—total 122. The club employs 1468 men, and the gross tonnage of all the vessels amounts to about 15,987 tons. If this is the position of one only of the many clubs dispersed throughout the country, it cannot fail to impress us with the great national importance of this branch alone of British sport. Where in the world is to be found any similar institution?





CHAPTER XII.

ROWING.

ROWING is a pastime peculiar to the English, and has been practised in this country from a very early date. "The art was certainly well understood by the primitive inhabitants of this country, who frequently committed themselves to the mercy of the sea in open boats constructed of wicker-work, and covered with leather. The Saxons were also expert in the management of the oar, and thought it by no means derogatory for a nobleman of the highest rank even to row or steer a boat with dexterity and judgment. Kolson, a Northern hero, boasting of his qualifications, declares that he was expert in handling the oar. The reader may possibly call to his recollection the popular story related by our historians con-

cerning Edgar, surnamed the Peaceable, who they tell us was conveyed in great state along the River Dee, from his palace in the city of Westchester to the church of St. John and back again; the oars were managed by eight kings, and himself, the ninth, sat at the stern of the barge and held the helm. This frolic, for I cannot consider it in any other light, appears to be well attested, and is the earliest record of a pastime of the kind."* Hume, however, gives a different version of this incident: "It is said, that residing once at Chester, and having purposed to go by water to the Abbey of St. John the Baptist, Edgar obliged eight of his tributary princes to row him in a barge upon the Dee."† If viewed in this light, it cannot certainly have been any pastime for the kingly rowers, whatever it might have been to Edgar himself.

The propelling of vessels by oars has of course been adopted long ago; Greeks and Romans and other nations made use of vessels having banks of oars. The boats of the Britons were no doubt urged on by oars, and the Saxons and

* Strutt, p. 88.

† Hume, vol. i. p. 118.

Danes could hardly have found their way to these shores without their aid. The point to arrive at, is the adoption of rowing as a pastime. It would be of little use going very far back ; therefore, assuming that the incident related of Edgar was a frolic, it will be interesting to trace the pastime through its various stages to our own times, when it has become one of the standing sports of the kingdom ; the annual boat-race between the two Universities on the placid waters of the Thames creating a general interest and speculation throughout the country, second only to that excited by the great Epsom event in horse-racing, "The Derby." No particular mention is made of rowing during the Norman period. A knight would probably not have condescended to such an occupation, but the handling of the oar was familiar to such as Robin Hood, and the hardy seamen of the coasts of Great Britain must at all events have been expert in the management of boats and the use of oars, although perhaps more from necessity than from any idea of a diversion.

Coming at once nearer to our own time, during the last century rowing was looked upon

as a manly pastime ; and to encourage it, Dogget, a well-known actor of the time, not only gave annually a coat and badge, but left a legacy by which this race has continued to this time. The race was first instituted in honour of the accession of George I., for it would appear that Dogget "was so attached to the Brunswick family, that Sir Richard Steele called him a Whig up to the head and ears."* In the year after George I. came to the throne, Dogget gave a waterman's coat and silver badge to be rowed for by six watermen on the first day of August, being the anniversary of that king's accession to the throne ; this he continued till his death, when it was found that he had bequeathed a certain sum of money, the interest of which was to be appropriated annually for ever to the purchase of a like coat and badge, to be rowed for in honour of the day by six young watermen whose apprenticeships had expired the year before. "The legacy provides three prizes, to be claimed by three young watermen, on condition they prove victorious in rowing from the Old Swan stairs, near London Bridge, to the White Swan at

* Hone "Everyday Book," vol. ii. p. 1062.

Chelsea ; the number of competitors on this occasion is restricted to six, who must not have been out of their time beyond twelve months. Every man rows singly in his boat, and his exertions are made against the tide. He who first obtains his landing at Chelsea receives the prize of honour, which is a waterman's coat ornamented with a large badge of silver, and therefore the match is usually called 'Rowing for the Coat and Badge;' the second and third candidates have small pecuniary rewards, but the other three get nothing for their trouble."* This circumstance gave rise to the ballad opera by Charles Dibdin, first performed at the Haymarket in 1774, called the "Waterman ; or, the First of August," in which is introduced the celebrated song of "Tom Tug," so long a favourite among people, the opera being still occasionally produced at some of the smaller theatres.

With reference to the term regatta, now applied both to sailing as well as rowing, "Baretti, in his dictionary, alludes to it as, '*Palio che si corre sull' acqua*, a race run on water in boats.' The word I take to be corrupted from Remigata,

* Strutt, p. 89.

the art of rowing. Florio, in his 'Worlde of Wordes,' has, '*Regattare, Ital.*, to wrangle; to cope or fight for the mastery.' The term, as denoting a showy species of boat-race, was first used in this country towards the close of the last century, for the papers of that time inform us that on June 23, 1775, a regatta, a novel entertainment, and the first of the kind, was exhibited in the river Thames, in imitation of some of those splendid shows exhibited at Venice on their grand festivals. The whole river, from London Bridge to the Ship tavern, Millbank, was covered with boats. About twelve hundred flags were flying before four o'clock in the afternoon, and vessels were moored in the river for the sale of liquors and other refreshments. Before six o'clock it was a perfect fair on both sides the water, and bad liquor, with short measure, was plentifully retailed. Plans of the regatta were sold from a shilling to a penny each, and songs on the occasion, in which regatta was the rhyme for Ranelagh, and royal family echoed to liberty."*

Of all the contests that have ever taken place,


* "Notes and Queries," First Series, vol. vii. p. 529.

I think as an instance of positive power of endurance and determination of purpose, the match that took place on May 12, 1824, to row from Oxford to London in sixteen hours, must be taken as a splendid example. The wager, which was for two hundred pounds, was laid between Captain Standen and Sir John Burgoyne. The terms of the match were:—"That six officers of the Third Guards should row in a six-oared wherry from Oxford to London in sixteen consecutive hours. The crew consisted of Captains Short, Hon. J. Westenra, Douglas, Blane, and Hudson, who with Captain Standen made up the six. The rowers to choose their own coxswains, and time to be kept by watches previously wound in Oxford and London. The boat in which the wager was to be contended for was built for the purpose by Mr. Sullivan of Millbank, after the plan of the Marquis of Worcester's *Fancy*, a boat remarkable for its swiftness. This wager arose from a bet made by Lord Newry about seventeen months ago, that he would row the same distance in eighteen hours, with five of his servants trained for that purpose. Some dispute arose as to his winning his match, but

on a chronometer being sent down to Oxford, he was declared to have won by one minute, having had wind, tide, and everything in his favour. Not only Sir John, but most of the knowing ones, as well as the amateurs of the (*aqua*) fancy, and the members of the majority of the aquatic clubs, were ready to offer three and four to one against the accomplishment of the wager. It was decided that the above-mentioned should be the day for the decision of the wager, and application was made by Captain Standen and his friends to the Commissioners of the Locks between Oxford and London for their assistance in clearing the locks for them, and supplying plenty of water as they passed through. This was readily granted, and through the arrangements made by the Commissioners nearly half an hour was gained by the rowers. On Tuesday morning the whole of the rowers arrived at Oxford, retired early to bed, and gave orders to be called at two, intending to start precisely at three. By a quarter before three, they were attired in their aquatic costume, blue striped shirts, crimson neckcloths, and white hats. They took in a little *aqua vitæ*, sandwiches, &c., and at one

minute past three o'clock in the morning their coxswain, Isaac King, gave the word 'All's ready,' and the rowers removed their oars from the perpendicular to the horizontal, and amidst the cheers of great numbers of persons, even at that early hour, the wherry cleft the liquid stream, and bore away towards its destination at the rate of above eight miles the hour. On the wherry arriving at Bolter's Lock, Maidenhead, halfway, it was half-past eleven o'clock; half an hour had been lost by the wind freshing to the east and the squally weather. At Bolter's Lock James Carnnon, the second coxswain, was taken on board, and by many a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, the wherry was brought to Windsor Bridge by one o'clock. No time was lost, though every man on board was fatigued; they pushed on with a most determined resolution, and, notwithstanding great difficulties, owing to the unfavourable state of the weather, they arrived at Teddington Lock by half-past five o'clock. In Teddington Lock they took refreshment, which was supplied by Mr. Topham of the Talbot inn, at Richmond. From Windsor to Staines, a distance of eight

miles, the rowers exerted themselves surprisingly, and they accomplished the distance in fifty minutes, and made a most gallant show. At Teddington the spirits of the gallant crew were raised very much by the arrival of a number of their London friends in wherries, skiffs, &c., who cheered them loudly as they exerted themselves to accomplish their object. Thomas Hill, the third coxswain, was taken on board at Teddington, and considering the wind was in their teeth, and the weather foul and contrary, they performed wonders. It was half-past five when they left Teddington Lock, and on their arrival at Putney Bridge it was precisely six o'clock. At this moment the Thames presented an unusual scene of gaiety. The river was covered with the members of the different aquatic clubs, in their uniforms. From Teddington to Westminster Bridge two eight-oared guard-boats cleared the way for the wherry, and but for the cheering of the spectators, which excited the liveliest emulation among the rowers, it is thought they would have sunk under the excessive exertion, and have lost the wager. The umpire, Colonel Meyrick, took his station at



Westminster Bridge at six o'clock. The craft on the river, the bridges, stairs, and wharves from which there was a view of Whitehall stairs, the appointed landing-place, were crowded with spectators. Several of the Bow-street patrol were placed in Whitehall stairs, to preserve the peace and to assist in the disembarkation. At half-past six o'clock the wherry arrived at Battersea Bridge, the rowers completely knocked-up—some of them almost bent double, and all of them much distressed. The tide was now in their favour, and having taken a little brandy, they appeared determined to conquer or to die, and at a quarter before seven o'clock they arrived at Westminster Bridge, amidst the acclamations of thousands of spectators, and Mr. Sullivan, the boat builder, towed them to Whitehall stairs. They declared that they should have arrived an hour sooner if the wind had been in their favour. It is believed that not fewer than 15,000*l.* changed owners by the event. Some of the best judges—even the coxswains who knew every yard of the river from Oxford to Westminster, were taken in, the current bets being four to one against the performance of the

match. The distance from Oxford to London is 118 miles, and was rowed in fifteen hours and three quarters."*

Of late years the practice of rowing seems to have greatly increased. The universities of Oxford and Cambridge have each of them become celebrated for their devotion to rowing. During term time the rivers Isis and Cam afford many an exciting scene, when the rival boats' crews struggle for the distinction of gaining the post of honour on either river. But more attractive than these local races are the annual contests which take place on the Thames about Easter time, between the two Universities. And when the first challenge was given, in 1829, a new era in boat racing seems to have been established.

The following is the description of the first contest that took place:—

"The match between the gentlemen of the University of Oxford and the gentlemen of the University of Cambridge to row from Westminster Bridge to Putney in eight-oared cutters, which has for some time past created great interest

* "Sporting Magazine," No. lxiv. p. 118.

among the sporting circles and on the river, came off, according to the articles of agreement, yesterday. For some time before the start took place, the western side of Westminster Bridge was crowded with spectators, who climbed upon the balustrades, and formed a living mass closely jammed together. Along Millbank there was a perfect mob, and on the opposite side of the water every place that could afford a view of the race was occupied. In short, excitement and curiosity were so great that it would be difficult to point out any spot from one terminus of the race to the other, on the banks, that had not an occupant. The boats were both built purposely for the match. The Cambridge boat was built in the yard of Searle. And the Oxford boat, though country built, was an equally clever craft.

“The Oxonians had the lead, and at Vauxhall Bridge were a boat’s length in advance of the Cantabs. The betting was now even, and it was plain the Oxford boat was becoming the favourite. This state of things, however, did not continue long. The Cambridge boat drew quickly upon her adversary as the boat approached the Red House. At this point the Oxford boat

appeared to get too close to the south bank of the river, and very shortly the Cambridge boat was ahead. At Battersea Bridge the Cambridge boat was half a length before the Oxford boat, and it became apparent that, barring accidents, she would be the winner. The Oxonians, however, made every effort to get ahead, but in vain. The Cambridge boat reached the goal of victory by a length, or very nearly so, before her opponent, and was greeted with the cheers of the assembled multitude. The match was rowed within half an hour, or very nearly so. There was some difference of opinion as to the precise time, making a variation of two minutes. Be this as it may, a better contest has, perhaps never been witnessed, and it is not a little refreshing to the real lovers of old English sports and manly exercises to find these sorts of amusements beginning to supersede the swindling dangerous, and absurd practice of steeple-chasing. Sports merely got up by publicans and horse dealers to pillage the unwary and enrich themselves."*

There have been now twenty-five annua


* "Annual Register," vol. lxxxii. p. 42.

contests, in which Oxford has been successful in no less than fifteen. On each occasion, should the weather be fine, the day is kept almost like a gala day, the river itself, and the banks, being crowded with spectators, whose hearty cheers tend to give encouragement to the struggling crews, and the general anxiety to know the result, shows the deep interest taken by the public in the matter. It cannot fail to strike every one that such a scene of rival rowers straining every nerve for victory, is essentially national. Nowhere but in this country is there such an exhibition between young men, who while pursuing their career of study, yet do not forget that the exercise of the brain, tempered by the exercise of the body, is the sure way to achieve the old adage of *Mens sana in corpore sano*.

A very different, but still characteristic picture is presented in the following account of the solitary adventure of an individual. In the autumn of 1865, Mr. Macgregor made his first voyage in a small canoe, with a double paddle and sails, which he managed alone. The route led sometimes over mountains, and through forests and

plains, where the boat had to be dragged or carried. The waters navigated were as follows. The rivers Thames, Sambre, Meuse, Rhine, Main, Danube, Reuss, Aar, Ill, Moselle, Meurthe, Marne, and Seine; the lakes Titisee, Constance, Unter See, Zurich, Zug, and Lucerne; together with six canals in Belgium and France, and two expeditions in the open sea of the British Channel. In the following year Mr. Macgregor made another canoe voyage, of which he published the particulars. The preface states: "Quite new things will meet us in this cruise, and different to what we told in the former voyage. Then we had the rapids to shoot and shallows to wade, and Swiss glaciers, and German castles, and French omelets to discuss; now we have to dash into salt water, to sail over inland seas, to grope amid foggy islands, and to fish and to cook under lonely gaunt rocks. Which cruise was the better one it is not easy to say. Each of them had its log, and the chips from the one are not like the shavings from the other, except in this, that they came from a pleasant paddle."

The canoe was named the *Rob Roy*, and was built of the best oak, and the deck of fine cedar.



The weight, without fittings, was 60lbs., and with all complete, 71lbs; the length over all, 14 feet; beam 26 inches, and the depth 11 inches. The double paddle was seven feet long. In this frail bark the adventurous oarsman proceeded on his journey, creating quite an excitement among the inhabitants of the different countries as he paddled himself along their water-courses, and almost proclaiming by the singularity of the circumstance his nationality, for it could only have been an Englishman who could have planned and carried out so successfully this curious yet interesting voyage of discovery, if it may be so termed. There can be but little doubt that the adventure will be repeated by others, and if it should be, it will equally be without doubt that whoever they may be individually they will come from the sea-girt shores of these islands.





CHAPTER XIII.

MISCELLANEOUS SPORTS.

IN the sports I have described I have confined myself to those which may be considered to be especially characteristic of the English. There are others which were at one time popular, but have now been entirely superseded, and there are also some pastimes which, although popular, do not admit of any lengthened description. Among the first are the jousts and tournaments, which formed the principal diversion of the aristocracy during the feudal times. The knights who alone had the privilege of joining in them were in general held in high estimation, and the qualifications supposed to be necessary were such as ought to have given a high tone to individual character. But the days of chivalry have long since gone by,

never again to be revived. The spread of knowledge has given a different turn to men's pursuits. A knight of old was often unable to write or to read; his modern representative would be scandalized at such an imputation, yet he has preserved, in all his changes, the same love of sport that characterized his ancestors and the same energy in pursuing it. "Closely allied with the joust and tournament was the pastime called quintain, which is supposed to have preceded jousts and tournaments. It was originally nothing more than the trunk of a tree or a post set up for the practice of tyros in chivalry; afterwards, a staff or spear was fixed in the earth, and a shield being hung upon it, was the mark to strike at. The dexterity of the performer consisted in smiting the shield so as to break the ligatures and throw it on the ground."* Strutt (p. 116) says: "This exercise is said to have received the name of quintain from Quinctus or Quintus, the inventor, but who he was, or when he lived, is not ascertained. The game itself, I doubt not, is of remote origin, and especially the exercise of the pel or post-quintain, which

* Hone's "Table Book," pp. 179 and 239.

is spoken of at large by Vegetius, who tells us that this species of mock combat was in common use among the Romans, who caused the young military men to practise at it twice in the day—at morning and at noon. The word, however, would appear more probably to be derived from the Welsh ‘gwyntyn,’ which literally meant vane, and was corrupted by the English into quintin, or quintain; thus we may naturally suppose that this ancient custom, and more particularly bridal-game, was borrowed by the Britons from the Welsh, who had it from the Romans on their invasion of England.” Strutt (p. 112) thus describes the sport: “In process of time this diversion was improved, and, instead of the staff and the shield, the resemblance of a human figure carved in wood was introduced. To render the appearance more formidable, it was generally made in the likeness of a Turk or Saracen, armed at all points, having a shield upon his left arm, and brandishing a club or a sabre with his right. Hence the exercise was called by the Italians ‘running at the armed man, or at the Saracen.’ The quintain thus fashioned, was placed upon a pivot, and so contrived as to move round and round

with facility. In running at this figure it was necessary for the horseman to direct his lance with great adroitness, and make his stroke upon the forehead, between the eyes, or upon the nose, for if he struck wide of these parts, especially upon the shield, the quintain turned about with much velocity, and, in case he was not exceedingly careful, would give him a severe blow upon the back with the wooden sabre held in his right hand, which was considered highly disgraceful to the performer, while it excited the laughter and ridicule of the spectators." The game was also practised on foot, and the Londoners of old were especially expert at it, for as none under the rank of esquire could take part in the jousts and tournaments, so the burgesses and yeomen had recourse to the quintain, which was not prohibited to any class of the people. A kind of quintain was also practised on the water by the Londoners. "A pole or mast was fixed in the Thames, with a shield attached to it, and a boat, with a man having a lance, standing in the prow, was driven towards it by the force of the oars and the tide. If the lance was broken, well; but if not, he was thrown into the water. It was a very popular

pastime, crowds coming to see it and make themselves merry."

As the knights of old were required to practise and excel in manly exercises, one of these was wrestling, which in the ages of chivalry was accounted an accomplishment a hero ought to possess. The first account we have of wrestling is in the 32nd chapter of Genesis, in which, until the angel manifested his miraculous power, Jacob proved himself to be no unskilful antagonist, so long as he supposed his opponent to be a mere mortal like himself. Whether the Jews ever practised it does not appear, nor does it seem likely in the state of bondage in which they were kept by the Egyptians, that any manly exercise would have been even permitted. And the same argument would hold good as regards the people under the ancient Eastern despotisms. But when Greece, emerging from obscurity, began to take the lead in civilization, the utility of public games, at which feats of strength were exhibited as a means of encouraging strong bodily exercise and so improving the health, was too apparent to be neglected, and accordingly athletic exercises were practised; among them

was wrestling, of which an account is given in the match that took place at the funeral of Patroclus between Ajax and Ulysses, and the excitement of which is well described in Lord Derby's translation of Homer, Book XXIII., line 810.

" Achilles, next before the Greeks displayed
The prizes of the hardy wrestler's skill.
The victor's prize, a tripod vast, fire-proof,
And at twelve oxen by the Greeks appraised,
And for the vanquished man, a female slave,
Priced at four oxen, skilled in household work.
Then rose, and loudly to the Greeks proclaimed,
Stand forth, whoe'er this contest will essay.
He said, and straight uprose the giant form
Of Ajax Telamon. With him uprose
Ulysses, skill'd in every crafty wile.
Girt with the belt, within the ring they stood,
And each, with stalwart grasp, laid hold on each.
As stand two rafters of a lofty house,
Each propping each, by skilful architect
Design'd the tempest's fury to withstand,
Creaked their backbones beneath the tug and strain
Of those strong arms, their sweat pour'd down like rain,
And bloody weals of livid purple hue
Their sides and shoulders streaked, as sternly they
For victory and the well-wrought tripod strove.
Nor could Ulysses Ajax overthrow,
Nor Ajax bring Ulysses to the ground,
So stubbornly he stood. But when the Greeks
Were weary of the long-protracted strife,

Thus to Ulysses mighty Ajax spoke.
Ulysses sage, Laertes' godlike son,
Or lift thou me, or I will thee uplift.
The issue of our struggle rests with Jove.
He said, and raised Ulysses from the ground,
For he, his ancient craft remembered not,
But locked his leg around, and striking sharp
Upon the hollow of the knee, the joint
Gave way. The giant Ajax backwards fell,
Ulysses on his breast. The people saw,
And marvelled. Then in turn Ulysses strove
Ajax to lift. A little way he moved,
But failed to lift him fairly from the ground,
Yet crooked his knee, that both together fell,
And side by side, defiled with dust, they lay.
And now a third encounter had they tried,
But rose Achilles, and the combat stayed.
Forbear, nor waste your strength in further strife.
Ye both are victors, both then bear away
An equal meed of honour, and withdraw,
That other Greeks may other contests wage.
Thus spoke Achilles. They his words obeyed,
And brushing off the dust, their garments donned."

This description seems evidently to imply that both the hug and the kick belonged to the Greek method of wrestling. In this country, from very early times, the counties of Cornwall and Devon and of Cumberland were celebrated for their wrestling. Cornwall is still famous for its hug, and Devon also for kicking. The hug too is, I believe, the system practised in Cum-

berland. At one time the Londoners were reputed to be well skilled in the art of wrestling, and there were often public trials of skill which frequently ended in downright battles between the contending parties. In these olden times wrestling was exhibited before the Lord Mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen, both at Skinner's Well, near Clerkenwell, and at Bartholomew fair, where they wrestled two and two. Among the ordinances to be observed, "so many aldermen as doe dine with the Lord Maior and the Sheriffes, are apparelled in their scarlet gowns lined, and after dinner their horses are brought to them after they dined, and those aldermen which dine with the sheriffes ride with them to the Lord Maior's house, for accompanying him to the wrastlings." From thence they returned home again. We gather from this, that the art of dining was as much in vogue among the good citizens of London of the olden time as at the present day. But the art of wrestling, although still practised—especially in the counties indicated above—has elsewhere dwindled down until it has almost disappeared, or at all events is confined to those localities.

The ball has been very prolific in games. In this country it has been the origin of many different kinds of pastimes—such as foot-ball, hand-ball, stool-ball, hurling, club-ball, trap-ball, &c. All these games were practised among the people. In many of the old English towns foot-ball is annually played in the streets to the great annoyance of the good citizens; and it was some such pastime for which the prize of a ball was given at Chester, the prize being afterwards transferred to the race-course. Strutt says (p. 100): “It does not appear among the popular exercises before the reign of Edward III., and then in 1349 it was prohibited by a public edict, not from any particular objection to the sport itself, but because it co-operated with other favourite amusements to impede the progress of archery.” “The danger attending the pastime occasioned King James I. to say, from his court, ‘I debarre all rough and violent exercises, as the football, meeter for lameing than making able the users thereof.’” It is now a favourite game not only with the English, but also among the Scotch;* “and at a great football match, played

* Hone’s “Everyday Book,” vol. i. p. 1854.

in Ettrick Forest, betwixt the Ettrick men and the men of Yarrow, the one part backed by the Earl of Home, and the other by Sir Walter Scott, two songs were written, from which the following stanza is taken :

“Then strip, lads, and to it, though sharp be the weather,
And if by mischance you should happen to fall,
There are worse things in life than a tumble on heather,
And life is itself but a game at football.”

Tennis is a game which cannot be considered so strictly national as many others in which the ball forms the principal part, for it was a favourite pastime among the French, being played by the court and also by the nobles. In this country it has been a pastime confined principally to the upper classes, and many of the English kings have also been not only fond of the game, but good players too. Henry VII. was a tennis player, as was also Henry VIII. According to Strutt (p. 94), James I., if not himself a tennis player, speaks of the pastime with commendation, and recommends it to his son as a species of exercise becoming a prince. Charles II. frequently diverted himself with playing at tennis, and had a particular kind of dress made for that

purpose. On the 4th January, 1664, Mr. Pepys went "to the Tennis Court, and there saw King Charles II. play at tennis, but," says he, "to see how the king's play was extolled, without any cause at all, was a loathsome sight, though sometimes he did play very well indeed, and deserved to be commended: but such open flattery is beastly." Pepys also alludes to Pall Mall. "Afterwards to St. James's Park, seeing people play at pall mall." Of this game we have a memorial left in the street that now bears the name, and which was once appropriated to its use, as was also the Mall, which runs parallel with it in St. James's Park. Strutt (p. 103), quoting an anonymous author, gives the following account. "Pall mall was a pastime not unlike goff; but if the definition of the former by Cotgrave be correct, it will be found to differ materially from the latter, at least as it was played in modern times. Pall maille, says he, is a game wherein a round box ball is struck with a mallet through a high arch of iron, which he that can do at the fewest blows, or at the number agreed upon, wins. The denomination mall given to the game is evidently derived from the mallet, or

wooden hammer, used by the players to strike the ball." It would seem from this description that the modern game of croquet is only a revival of the old game of pall mall, with some modifications no doubt, but in all the essential points it is the same game; and the definition of the old game would answer in all the particulars to the modern fashionable revival of hockey, a game much practised at schools, of which, however, Strutt makes no mention. But of goff, the Scotch equivalent, there is frequent notice, as a highly popular pastime in the North.

"Of cricket," says Blaine in his "Encyclopædia of Rural Sports," "the exact origin is uncertain, but there is no doubt it was here, and here only, it was reared and matured, which gives it an additional hold on our esteem. That the date of its commencement should not have been ascertained in this age of research is remarkable. The game of cricket is thought to be derived from the chugan of the Persians, but is more nearly allied to the bandy-ball of the Welsh, the hurling of the Irish, or the elegant golf of the Scotch. It may also be remarked that the chugan was played on horseback.

We consider cricket as having a particular claim to patronage, for it is in every sense a game of the people generally, from the highest to the lowest. It excites no envy by its exclusiveness, as it equally engages the attention of the prince and the peasant. We have several instances of royal cricketers. George IV. formed a cricket ground adjoining the Pavilion at Brighton, on which, if we mistake not, he has himself often figured as batsman and fieldsman. And the Royal Clarence Cricket Club at Hampton was instituted by his late Majesty William IV. The late Duke of Richmond and the Duke of Hamilton were not only warm admirers of cricket, but also very excellent practitioners. The highly esteemed Duke of Bedford patronized it as an exercise particularly calculated to keep up the manly character of the people, and his opinion of it was worthy of his patriotism and his acumen. By associating together the active, the ardent, and the dexterous of every grade, it encourages a friendly feeling between parties, at other times widely separated, and that without destroying the respect and deference due to rank and wealth." In Ogilvie's "Imperial Dictionary" it is defined

“as a play or exercise with bats and balls, British, kriget, a little elevation ; quere Swedish, krycka, stilts or crutches,” though neither of these derivations seems to point in a right direction as regards the meaning. Strutt (p. 106) says :—“ From the club ball originated, I doubt not, that pleasant and manly exercise distinguished in modern times by the name of cricket. I say in modern times, because I cannot trace the appellation beyond the commencement of the last century, where it occurs in one of the songs published by D’Urfey.” In the book of “Field Sports” it is said that “this notable game is thoroughly British, and of all the English athletic games, none perhaps presents so fine a scope for bringing into full and constant play the qualities both of the mind and body as that of cricket. A man who is essentially stupid will not make a fine cricketer, neither will he who is not essentially active. He must be active in all his faculties ; he must be active in mind to prepare for every advantage, and active in eye and limb to avail himself of those advantages ; he must be cool-tempered, and in the best sense of the term manly, for he must be able to endure fatigue, and

to make light of pain, since, like all athletic sports, cricket is not unattended with danger resulting from inattention and inexperience." I have given these extracts as showing what the generally received idea has been as to this truly English game.

But a writer under the signature of Wyckhamist in *Land and Water*, makes the following statement, which is somewhat similar to the account to be found in Blaine's "Encyclopædia of Rural Sports :"—

"The earliest mention of cricket or anything like it that I have found, is at a very remote date. In the wardrobe accounts of 28th Edward I., A.D. 1300, among entries of money paid for the use of Prince Edward, at this time not quite sixteen, in playing at different games, is the following: 'Domino Johanni de Leck, capellano domini Edwardi fil ad creag et alios ludos per vires, per manus proprias apud Westm., 10 die Aprilis, 100s.' A hundred shillings, equal to nearly as many pounds in these days, was a stiff sum to pay for a prince's amusement. Of course I cannot assert that the game of creag bore any close resemblance to our game of cricket. At the

same time I do not doubt that it was the same thing in an immature form, and it may interest some readers to find that the first cricketer on record was also the first Prince of Wales." It has run in the blood since—Frederick, eldest son of George II., George IV., when young, and the present Prince, having all liked the game. Indeed, it is said by Wraxall, though denied by others, that the first-mentioned prince's death was partly due to an injury received from a cricket ball. From the above early date I must make a jump of about two centuries and a half, and descend from a royal personage to the town boys of Guildford. Russell's history of that town, 1801, quotes from some legal proceedings about some disputed town property, A.D. Elizabethæ 1597, the following evidence. "John Derrick, gent., one of the Queen's Majestie's coroners of the county of Surrey, aged fifty-nine, saith that he knew this land fifty years or more. When he was a scholar in the free school of Guildford he and several of his fellows did runne and play there at cricket, and other places. . . ." This proves fairly enough that cricket was a well-known every-day game in 1550, or thereabouts,

in Surrey, and tends also to explain the early prominence of the southern counties — Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Hampshire—in the game. Again I make a leap of about two centuries to the earliest match on record—that between Kent and England in 1746. This is printed in “Lillywhite’s Book of Cricket-scores” and elsewhere, but I have nowhere met with any allusion to a sort of jocose heroic poem about it, written by James Love, comedian, and published in Edinburgh in 1754. This rare book I have lately had the good fortune to pick up, after years of search. The poem is in three books, fairly well-written, with numerous notes ridiculing the heroic poetry of the day.

In 1746 Kent challenged England. From the description in Love’s poem, it would appear that England went in first and made 40. Kent scored 53 in their first innings. In the second innings England improved on their former score, getting to 70. Kent then went in with 58 to win, and pulled the match off gallantly by one wicket. “In this match 28 wickets were bowled, 10 caught, and one stumped. The two stumps were one foot high and two feet apart, connected by

a bail, and if the ball passed through this wide space no harm was done, which makes the number of wickets bowled somewhat remarkable ; but it must be remembered that, with the heavy curved bats of the time, some few of which are preserved, and which averaged, as far as we know, about four pounds in weight, a defensive game was almost impossible. The third stump was added in 1775, and the wickets brought nearly to our standard, though both lower and narrower, being 22 in. by 6 in. against 27 in. by 8 in., as they have been for about fifty years."

This account would seem to assign a remote origin to this game. Whether further research will carry its origin still more removed from the present time remains to be determined.

The game of cricket does not appear to have been always confined to the male sex ; Southey in his "Commonplace Book,"* speaks of "a cricket match at Bury, between the married women of the parish and the maidens ; the matrons won. The Bury women then chal-

* Fourth Series, p. 416.

lenged all the women in their own county." And in the "Annual Register,"* there is mention made of an extraordinary match at cricket played at Moulsey Hurst on August 3, 1775, between six unmarried against the same number of married women, and was won by the former, though one of the latter ran seventeen notches. There were great bets depending.

The following curious match will, I doubt not, well close this brief account of this popular game :—

"A novel game of cricket was played for a considerable sum on Harefield Common, near Rickmansworth, between two gentlemen of Middlesex and Mr. Francis Framper, farmer at Harefield, with the help of a thoroughbred sheep-dog. In the first innings the two gentlemen got three runs, and Mr. Framper three for himself and two for his dog. In the second innings the two gentlemen again got three runs; and Mr. Framper then going in, and getting two runs, beat the two gentlemen, leaving two wickets standing. Before the game began the odds were 5 to 1 against Mr. Framper and his canine

* Vol. xviii. p. 143.

partner, but after the first innings bets were so altered that 4 to 1 were laid on Framper and his dog. The dog always stood near his master when he was going to bowl, and the moment the ball was hit he kept his eye upon it and started off after it with speed, and on his master running up to the wicket the dog would carry the ball in his mouth and put it into his master's hand with such wonderful quickness that the gentlemen found it very difficult to get a run even from a very long hit."*

Bowls was at one time a favourite game among all classes of the English. Strutt says that it was probably an invention of the Middle Ages, and that he could not by any means ascertain the time of its introduction, but that he had traced it back to the thirteenth century. It seems to have originated in this country. It is, at all events, so far national that formerly to almost every house there was attached a bowling-green for the amusement of ladies as well as of gentlemen. It was a pastime much patronized by the court and nobility in the time of the

* "Annual Register," vol. lxi., p. 266.

Stuarts, and there was a bowling-green near the palace. Pepys speaks in his Diary of playing at bowls with his wife. It is at present but little practised, and perhaps it would now be as difficult to find a country house with a bowling-green as formerly it would have been to have found a country house without one.

Skating cannot be called a purely English pastime, for the very nature of the climate often shuts out every chance of pursuing it. But there evidently appears to be some change in our climate, for skating is more frequently alluded to formerly than at the present time. "The earliest notice of skating in England is obtained from the earliest description of London, 'when the great fenne or moore which watereth the walles of the citie on the north side is frozen. Many young men play upon the yce. Some stryding as wide as they may doe slide swiftly; some tye bones to their feet, and under their heeles, and shoving themselves by a little picked staffe doe slide as swiftly as a birde flyeth in the air, or an arrow out of a crosse-bow.' One of the sports was, for two to start a great way off opposite to each other,

and when they met, to lift their poles and strike each other by their motion. The present skates were derived from Holland.”*

Of angling so much has been written and said that it would be quite beside the purpose to enter at any length into a subject so well-known and appreciated. It has, however, one point which renders it necessary that some allusion should be made to it, and that is, its exclusively English character. I am not aware that it is resorted to as a sport by any of the people of the Continent ; and even if now there may be found a follower of the gentle craft, it is no doubt owing to the example, or even possibly contact with the angling loving Englishman.

In Grafton’s “Chronicle” there is a very curious account of the supposed origin of the art. “Ye have heard before howe Wilfrede was deposed and put out of the see of Yorke, wherefore he went to Rome and complained vpon him to Agathon, then Bishop of that See. But the king and Theodorus had there such proctors and friends that he fayled of his purpose, wherefore he returned to the south Saxons, and after he

* Hone, vol. ii. p. 116.

had preached among them xv. yeres, he then taught them the art and craft of fyshing.”*

Taking a long leap over time we come to our gossiping acquaintance Pepys, who says :—“ This day, Mr. Cæsar (Pepys’ boy’s lute-master) told me a pretty experiment of his of angling with a minnikin, a gut-string varnished over, which keeps it from swelling, and is beyond any hair for strength and smallness. The secret I like mightily.”† This account carries us back about two centuries, for what must I suppose be termed the origin of fly-fishing, for without the gut line the kind of sport could not have been attempted. Angling has almost become a pursuit requiring special knowledge, for the instincts and habits of fish have to be studied and understood before the fisherman can pretend to much skill in his craft. Great ingenuity and fertility of invention have been displayed in making the tackle necessary for the art, and hence greater skill has been attained. At all events, wherever any water in any part of the world affords reasonable prospect of sport, it is not too much to arrogate to the nation that, if an Angler should be found there

* P. 98, A.D. 635.

† Vol. iii. p. 431.

pursuing his craft, he would scarcely be any other than an Englishman.

I will here allude to a subject that has of late been brought prominently forward. I mean the combination of individuals under the name of the Alpine Club, for the purpose of exploring the ice-bound range of mountain peaks which comprise the Alps. The idea has been conceived and carried out entirely by Englishmen. At first sight it may seem an enterprise only for those who were disposed to risk their lives for no more apparent object than a straining after notoriety. But the Alpine Club aims at a far higher purpose. It has already contributed much valuable scientific information ; and as the members extend their daring wanderings, much may yet be elicited that will prove of interest to those who devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge of whatever kind that is presented to them. Much of the danger of the ascent has been mitigated by the experience of the past, so that probably ere long an Alpine journey may not require more nerve or energy than may be necessary to bring any similar kind of undertaking to a successful issue.

The club, however, does not intend to confine its explorations merely to the Alps. The vast range of the Himalayas are already proposed for the active exertions of the members, and a regular system of scientific investigation will go hand-in-hand with the mere pleasure and excitement which such ascents seem to afford to those who have enrolled themselves for these undertakings. These are adventures of which an Englishman at home may well talk of with pride, even if his predilections do not induce him to join in the pursuit. A far higher purpose is intended, by these pioneers into the interminable regions of mountain snow, than that of mere vulgar notoriety; and whatever results may be obtained, either for science or art, will be owing entirely to the energy and daring of our countrymen by which they will be achieved. The club consists of upwards of 300 members, every one of whom, I believe I am right in stating, is an Englishman, the pursuit apparently having no attraction for any of the inhabitants of the Continent.

The character of the English has been often portrayed by foreign writers. On one point they seem all to agree, and that is, in the inherent

love of sport displayed by the Islanders. It is that, which distinguishes them from all other people. The following portrait is taken from Hentzner's "Itinerary." I must leave my readers to make for themselves a comparison with the modern specimen of his countrymen:—

"The English are serious like the Germans: lovers of show—liking to be followed wherever they go by whole troops of servants who wear their masters' arms in silver fastened to their left arms, and are not undeservedly ridiculed for wearing tails hanging down their backs. They excel in dancing and music, for they are active and lively, though of a thicker make than the French. They cut their hair close on the middle of the head, letting it grow on either side. They are good sailors and better pirates — cunning, treacherous, and thievish. Above three hundred are said to be hung annually in London. Beheading with them is less infamous than hanging. They give the wall as the place of honour. Hawking is the general sport of the gentry. They are more polite in eating than the French, devouring less bread, but more meat, which they roast in perfection. They put a good deal of sugar in their

drink. Their beds are covered with tapestry, even those of farmers. They are often molested with the scurvy, said to have first crept into England with the Norman Conquest. Their houses are commonly of two stories, except in London, where they are of three or four, though but seldom of four. They are built of wood, those of the richer of stone, where the owner has money. They are powerful in the field, successful against their enemies, impatient of anything like slavery, vastly fond of great noises that fill the ear, such as the firing of a cannon, drums, and the ringing of bells, so that it is common for a number of them that have got a glass in their heads to go up into some belfry and ring the bells for hours together for the sake of exercise. If they see a foreigner very well made, or particularly handsome, they will say it is a pity he is not an Englishman."

I now bring this part of my subject to a close, and in doing so I venture to hope that I have not unsuccessfully pointed out how our sports and pursuits have had their influence upon the national character. It is essential to observe that in all these pastimes and pursuits the people themselves form a prominent part, and thus

attest their love for manly and athletic exercises. These form the basis of that ceaseless energy and activity which have made these islands, in no other way remarkable, the cherished home of individual and national liberty.





CHAPTER XIV.

AGRICULTURE.

THE pursuit of agriculture has attracted the attention of mankind from the earliest ages. Indeed, the art of tilling, cultivating, and improving the earth, so as to render it fruitful, claims the precedence of all other arts. It was the first care of Noah and his descendants, though no doubt carried on in a primitive way. From the age of Moses almost down to the Christian era, though something may be gleaned from incidental notices in the Scriptures, and in the writings of a few ancient authors, we are quite unacquainted with the means by which food was obtained from the soil to support the increasing wants of the human race. The land watered by the Tigris and Euphrates supplied abundantly the various pro-

ducts fit for human food ; but more was due to the soil itself, and the simple process of irrigation, than to any skill in the cultivation. This was the case also in Egypt, where even to this day the Nile overflowing enables the land to yield its annual increase. The Greek and the Roman both gave their time and attention to the subject ; and ‘some fragments of the Greeks are the first rudiments of husbandry upon record.’ There are also several Latin authors whose writings upon this interesting subject have reached us. I need not, however, dwell upon ages so remote. It is enough if we can connect the improved cultivation of the soil with the freedom of the people.

The irruption of the barbarous nations into the Roman Empire soon abolished any improvement that might at that time have been made in agriculture. The innumerable swarms of men that overran all Europe contented themselves with the possession merely of the vast deserts their arms had made, and left the occupation of husbandry to their conquered slaves, who were generally in a most abject condition. And thus “from the fall of the Empire till the revival of

learning in the fifteenth century, little is known of the state of agriculture in any part of Europe. The historians of the period were too much occupied in recording military achievements, and with the rude policy and intestine broils of their respective countries, to give much attention to the peaceful, and at that time degraded labours of the husbandman. The policy of the feudal system, the distribution of society which it occasioned, and the perpetual dissensions and party hostilities which it engendered, furnish the best evidence of the low state of an art which can flourish only under the protection of the law, and be carried on with success only by the energy of freemen."* And with reference to the agriculture of this country, we are equally in the dark down to the close of the fourteenth century; indeed, it was not until the end of the sixteenth century that any great improvement took place. In the Book of Husbandry, by Fitzherbert, judge of the Common Pleas, in the reign of Henry VIII., we find the first rudiments of the art. He was the first Englishman who studied the nature of soils, and the laws of

* "Enc. Brit.:" Art. Agriculture.

vegetation with philosophical attention. In the time of the Commonwealth the art of husbandry was much encouraged by Cromwell. During the reign of the second Charles, Evelyn was the first writer who inspired his countrymen with the desire of reviving the study of agriculture. He was followed by the famous Jethro Tull, and their joint labours opened a new and extensive area in which the minds of men might range and expand freely.

The ancients generally entitled the earth to the production of the animals, vegetables, and other bodies upon and about it; but several of the moderns, and among them some of very great name, both here and abroad, have declared in favour of water as the efficient cause of vegetation. Lord Bacon was of opinion that for the nourishment of vegetables, water is almost all in all, and that the earth doth but keep the plant upright, and save it from overheat and overcold. Evelyn also thought that "water is, of its own constitution alone, a soil to vegetables, because it is of all substances best disposed for ingression to insinuate into and fertilize the earth, which is the reason why floated grounds arise remarkably

fertile after the flood has subsided ; “ but he also says, “ neither do I here, by any means, exclude the air, nor deny its perpetual commerce and benign influences, charged as it comes with those pregnant and subtle particles, which pervading and insinuating into the earth’s more steady and less volatile salts, that intestine fermentation is begun and promoted which gives life, growth, and motion to all that she produces.” On the other hand, Tull is the only person who makes earth the food of plants. Experience contradicts this opinion. Tull, however, must be considered the father of British agriculture, and the principal features of his husbandry are “ the laying the land into narrow ridges of five or six feet, and, upon the middle of these, drilling one or two, or three rows, distant from one another about seven inches when there were three, and ten inches when only two. The distance of the plants on one ridge from those on the contiguous one he called an interval, the distance between the rows on the same ridge a space or partition, the former was stirred repeatedly by the horseshoe, the latter by the handhoe.”* And he allowed

* “ Enc. Brit. : ” Art. Agriculture.

only three pecks of wheat to the acre. This plan was adopted, with some modifications, by the Rev. S. Smith, and is known now as the Lois Weedon system, from the name of Mr. Smith's parish; and I believe in this way Mr. Smith grew successive crops of wheat for fourteen years without manure of any kind. In the culture of the turnip, Tull made his ridges of the same breadth as for wheat, but only one row was drilled on each. The drill system is now the basis of the husbandry generally practised throughout the country.

“The cultivation of the turnip was the first step to any improvement in the cultivation of the soil. Upon it the four-course or Norfolk system was formed. The turnip, and clover, are the two main pillars of the best courses of British husbandry; they have contributed more to preserve and augment the fertility of the soil for producing grain, to enlarge and improve our breeds of cattle and sheep, and to furnish a regular supply of butcher's meat all the year, than any other crops. And they will probably be long found vastly superior for extensive cultivation to any of the rivals which have often

been opposed to them in particular situations." ("Enc. Brit.") This system, which according to Mons. de Lavergne we derive from Flanders, for "in those rich plains originated that alternation of crops which has since been adopted, and then in France, and is destined to make the circuit of the globe," was introduced during the last century, and received the name of the New Husbandry, and is now the basis of modern English farming. We owe to it the very marked superiority which is displayed in the cultivation of the soil in this country to that of any other. But it must not be forgotten, that no improvement could have taken place but for the free institutions which the people enjoy. The farmers have grown up as an independent body, and have raised themselves to a solid position such as does not exist among any of the Continental nations, where are still to be found the remains of the feudal system, which divided the inhabitants into those distinct classes, the lords of the soil and their slaves. The Revolution in France swept away at one swoop this fatal line of demarcation, but raised up in its stead that hydra-headed monster the equal division of the land, the con-

sequence of which has been, that while the shadow of equality has been partially obtained, the substance of freedom has been altogether lost. It is not, I think, too much to assert that free institutions are as essential to the agricultural as to the social and political progress of a nation. The history of former ages will fully confirm this view, in which it will be found that as a fondness for manly exercises and games form the groundwork of the freedom of a people, so is this popular freedom a necessary condition of the agriculture of the several countries. In support of my opinion, I have the following strong testimony from the pen of one who well understands the position of agriculture in this and in his own country.

“ It is generally thought that the equal division of property was only enforced by law after the Revolution. This is not correct. Under the old *régime* the estates of the nobles were those alone entailed. The equal division of inheritance existed for the middle class and the people. The Revolution merely extended this law to all estates. M. de Lavergne greatly approves of this measure, and certainly adduces very cogent

reasons to support his views ; but this is a point, and perhaps the only one, in which we do not agree with him, and few who can appreciate the social and intellectual influence exercised by the aristocracy of this country will concur with M. de Lavergne on the subject of the privilege of primogeniture. We need only point to the efforts made by the large landowners of England to bring agricultural practice into unison with scientific discoveries by costly experiments, which they alone could afford to make, and by the happy results of which the agriculture of the whole world has benefited to a degree which it is difficult to realize. It would indeed be idle, when addressing English readers, to expatiate upon the advantages which all the institutions, nay, all the interests of England have derived, and derive more and more from the high status of her aristocracy. There is not a single page of English history in which the aristocracy are not associated with its glorious records ; and although we are not prepared to combat M. de Lavergne's arguments in respect to the French aristocracy, who, during the last few reigns previous to the Revolution, were certainly more remarkable for

their courtly and dissolute habits than their devotion to the public weal, and until the last few years never did anything to promote agricultural progress, yet we maintain that the two cases are by no means parallel, and that in England the law of primogeniture, by preserving the entirety of large estates, by concentrating the powerful means of wealth into the hands of intelligent, patriotic, and benevolent men, has been, and is still, one of the strongest bulwarks of English prosperity ; whilst on the other hand, one of the most fatal gifts of the Revolution as regards the agricultural progress of France was the law of inheritance. No proprietor can be certain that his estate will come into the hands of any of his children. Should he die before they are all of age the law steps in and forcibly sells his estates in order to divide the proceeds among them, or else the task of subdivision may be too arduous to be amicably arranged, in which case the heirs agree to sell. With such a contingency staring him in the face, how can a prudent father of a family bring himself to attempt improvements of a permanent character upon his estate ? Is it not much better for him to invest his money in

securities more easily realized, and consequently more easily divided among his children? This sentiment goes so far that it is a prevalent opinion among landed proprietors in France that all money spent in land improvements is inevitably lost."*

The breed of cattle in this country has been brought to the highest state of perfection, far excelling all others of any nation. In sheep we have no equal, and our pigs are the admiration of all who have a tendency for those animals. If we look to the mechanical appliances, the agricultural implement department at any cattle-show would be sufficient to indicate the perfection arrived at. Other climates may be more favourable, other soils more fertile, but taking farming as a whole, it is without doubt our boast that we are far in advance of any other nation whatever. And I maintain that this superiority is owing to the free character of the people, who, left to act for themselves, have developed a system by their skill and energy which

* Rural Economy of France since 1789, by Mons. F. R. de la Tréhonuais. "Journal of Royal Agricultural Society." vol. xlv. part ii. p. 526.

has produced most astonishing results. Another link in the chain of consequences arising from free institutions, another proof, if any were wanting, that the human mind, when freed from thralldom, will achieve more than could ever be done by all the interference of State power and patronage, such as is now the condition of the chief nations of the Continent of Europe, and which is thus graphically described by Mr. Jacob in his tracts relating to the corn trade and corn laws. "The greater part of France, a still much greater portion of Germany, and nearly the whole of Prussia, Austria, Poland, and Russia present a wretched uniformity of system. It is called the Three Course Husbandry, consisting of 1st, one year's clean fallow; 2nd, winter corn, chiefly rye, with a proportion of wheat commensurate to the manure that can be applied; 3rd, summer corn, or barley and oats. There are occasional and small deviations from this system. In some few cases potatoes, in others peas, are grown in the fallow year, but they are only minute exceptions to the generally-established system. It is not surprising that under such a system the produce should not be much more

than four times the quantity of seed, at which rate it is calculated, as appears to be rightly, by Baron Alexander Humboldt. Among the cultivators of the land little or no accumulation of capital has been formed, from the lord to the lowest grade of the peasantry all are alike destitute of disposable funds. The lords are only rich in land and sufficiently at their ease, if that land be unencumbered with mortgages or annuities. The peasants, whether owners of the live stock and implements, or having the use of them with the land from the owners, are content to live on from year to year, eating their own produce, growing their own wool and flax, and converting them into garments. They are quite satisfied if they can dispose of as much surplus produce as will pay the small share of money rent which becomes due to their lord." As these remarks were made only as far back as 1828, any improvement can only have taken place since that time. A change, however, has come over this state of things, and improved courses have been introduced, but as agriculture is looked upon only as an occupation for the lower orders, the owners taking no further inte-

rest than belongs to the receiving the rent from the degraded tiller of the soil, there is clearly no opening up of new systems of progress. In addition to this abject condition of the labourer in France, by the compulsory subdivision of the land on the death of the proprietor, a class of pauper landholders have been created who, having no capital and no interest in progress, continue helplessly on, in the condition in which they have been left. Belgium and parts of Italy ought, perhaps, to be excepted from these strictures; in Belgium, indeed, the people being free are left to their own development. In Italy, too, there seems now every probability of a revival of the art of husbandry. But in France the perpetual creation of small landowners, only intent upon asserting an outward show of independence, while they despise the occupation which gives to them their scanty subsistence, can only result in a system of stagnation, if not indeed of permanent decadence, of all agricultural knowledge and skill.

The great progress made in agriculture in this country is no doubt in some degree due to those peculiar habits which belonged to the Saxon,

and have been transmitted to these times. According to Dr. Knox, the tendency of the Saxon is always towards an isolated life; he does not like to be driven into the town; if he settles, it is in the country, and his natural disposition leads him to live apart, to have his habitation to himself, and hence his tendency for rural pursuits. His energies are directed to the sports of the chase, his amusements are chiefly those which bring him into the open air. And from this would naturally follow that the cultivation of the soil would naturally be to him an occupation both of pleasure and profit. The Celt, on the contrary, is gregarious; for him a town has the preference; its associations are those which suit his fancy, and if the country should at any time require his presence, the life of the town is transferred thither. This diversity of character is displayed in a remarkable manner by the example of the French and English, and we may thus see the great diversity in the tendency of the pursuits. With this natural disposition, it is only what might be expected that the Englishman should cultivate the art of husbandry; it enables him to live apart, it is to him an element of

personal liberty, it gratifies the longing for self-dependence. Should fortune smile upon the career of the merchant or the manufacturer, the Englishman at once flies to the country; the possession of land is his intuitive desire, and he finds a pride, if not always a profit, in cultivating his broad acres. On the other hand, should the Frenchman acquire even a competence, for him the country holds out no charm. He seeks the social influence of the town, and should his means so order it, his darling object would be to bury himself amidst the boulevards that adorn, and the cafés that enliven his darling capital.

I do not propose to enter into any details upon the cultivation of the soil. The subject is one so large and expansive as to require the exclusive treatment it has received at the hands of others. But it must be patent to every one, what an enormous development of the art has taken place in this country during the present century. It has received no support from the Government; it owes nothing to bureaucratic influence; it has risen entirely to its present state by the active exertions of individuals. Associations have been formed which, from small beginnings, have

now spread throughout the country, until every county can now boast of more than one common centre from whence an influence may be exercised over the surrounding districts, and prizes are offered for stimulating private energy. The analysis of soils has led the way to an improved rotation, and to the skilful application of artificial manures. The principle of selection in breeding, and also of crossing, has brought the different classes of animals to the highest state of perfection, and mechanism has been applied most successfully—from the ploughing of the land by the mighty aid of steam to the preparation of every grain for the market. And one of the happy consequences has been that the condition of the agricultural labourer has been inquired into, and a change for the better has been made in his individual and social position. We look in vain to any other quarter of the world for any similar progress in agriculture. There is not a breed of cattle that can compete successfully with our Short-horns, Herefords, Devons, or even with our local breeds from Sussex, Norfolk, Aberdeen, and the Highlands. No sheep on the Continent or elsewhere can bear comparison with our

Leicesters, Lincolns, Cotswolds, South Downs, or other downs. The pigs of the Berkshire and Yorkshire classes are unrivalled. If we turn to the grain and root crops, if more favoured climes can produce better cereals, the root crops may at all events claim prominence. Our agricultural implements have no rivals. And even if in America machinery may have received improvement, the invention of the reaping machine has been awarded to the Scotch, and certainly the application of steam is of home growth, and its successful achievement is indeed a national triumph. To all these things, in the progress of agriculture, we may point with pride, assured that whatever may be the future of this country, like the Greek of ancient days, the Englishman will have left to posterity the example of a high state of agricultural art and skill.






CHAPTER XV.

MUSIC.

IT has been a fashion among many to say that the English are not a musical nation.

I am at a loss to understand upon what grounds such an opinion has been formed. Early in the history of this country the people displayed not only a fondness for, but a practical acquaintance with music; for the venerable Bede tells us that early in the seventh century it was customary at convivial meetings to hand a harp from one person to another, and that every one present played it in turn, singing a song to the music. The story of King Alfred's visit to the Danish camp is sufficient to prove the Saxon monarch's skill, and also the passion of the Danes for the minstrel's song, which is thus chronicled: "Then, as sayth a writer called

William of Malmesbury, the king put himself in great ieorperdie, for he put on him the garment of a minstrell, and, with his instrument of musicke, he entered the tentes of the Danes, and in showing them his pastime with ieastes and songes, he espied all their slouth and idlenessse, and also heard much of their counsayle, and after returned againe unto his company, and tolde to them all the maner of the Danes." If music was thus the amusement of the great body of the people, it was equally so of the upper classes, and many English sovereigns even did not disdain becoming proficient. Richard I. was a musician. Henry V. is generally understood to have had some acquaintance with it. Henry VIII. was educated for the church, which in those days implied musical knowledge. Queen Elizabeth was a skilful performer on the virginal, an instrument which is supposed to have derived its name from her spinsterhood, although Fetis asserts, "that the virginal was in existence in 1530, and had the same name." Charles I. was a performer on the viol de gamba. The second Charles was known for his love of music. And the first Royal Band of Musicians was established



in this reign, chronicled in the somewhat irreverend term of "Four and twenty fiddlers all of a row." The Hanoverian line has displayed a remarkable passion for the art, and among some of the sovereigns in the succession have been found its warmest patrons.

The history of music shows that the Jews were a musical nation, and probably among the first who had any national melodies. Music has always been a part of the education of the Jewish children, which has been retained to the present day. The Egyptians were no doubt musicians, if we may judge of the harp found by the traveller Bruce among their sculptured monuments. But whatever was the state of music at that early period, it is to the Greeks that we owe the first elements of a musical art. The Greek music was based upon mathematical rules. Every interval was measured by the vibrations of a monochord. And the scale indicated and known as the immutable system of Pythagoras, about 500 years B.C., consisted of a series of tetrachords, that is, of four conjunct tetrachords and one disjunct tetrachord, as they were called, which, with a note added below,

made a complete succession of notes of two octaves. It would be impossible without figures to explain this singular system; I must therefore leave the curious reader to the study of Burney, Hawkins, and other authorities, merely giving my opinion that in this settlement of the musical scale of the Greeks, the human ear had no part. All the tetrachords had the same intervals assigned to them—namely, a semitone and two whole tones. The first tetrachord was from B natural to E natural, the second from E to A, the third commencing at B went to E, and the fourth from E to A. The third was called “disjunct tetrachord,” as it did not begin upon the same note on which the lower tetrachord ended; and to remedy this supposed defect a fifth tetrachord was introduced, which beginning at A, the last note of the second tetrachord, took the intervals B flat, C, and D, in order to continue the fixed tetrachord system. An A was added below, to which the name *proslambanomenos* was given, and by which the two octaves were made complete. It must be almost obvious that this building-up of a system implied no reliance whatever upon the ear. These in-

tervals were never altered, although the pitch might be changed; and when this was done, it constituted what was termed a different mode. I am aware that some say each mode had its different system of intervals; but I think it more consonant with the original theory to suppose that some fixed rule was adhered to, otherwise there must have been inextricable confusion. As it is, it has been computed that the Greek music has been supposed to comprise upwards of 1200 characters, and took a lifetime to learn, which from its intricacy seems very probable. The Romans, as far as I can make out, merely followed the Greek scale of two octaves, avoiding all the intricacies. About the fourth century a new era of music began, with what is termed the Ambrosian modes, but evidently having no rules for guidance. In the sixth century the Gregorian modes were introduced, which were only plain chants. But music as an art must still have been in a very primitive state. There was no regular scale of notes, and certainly there was no indication of harmony or concords. In the tenth century one Guido arrived at a hexachord system by adding two notes below, to each of the Greek

tetrachords, and extending the system of notes to about two and a half octaves, by a most clumsy contrivance, making one hexachord overlap another. He was the inventor of the six monosyllables of the solfeggio, ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la; but the seventh, si, which resolved upon the key-note, was only discovered subsequently, and then the scale being completed, it seems to have been all at once discovered that this was the natural scale—that is, the ear having had nothing to do with its formation, yet felt sensibly the effect, and thus it has consequently been pronounced the scale of nature, and, as such, is the basis of modern music. From the time of this satisfaction of the ear—that is, when it was once taken into consultation—then the art of music began to be developed; but there remained yet much to be done. There were no bars. There was no system of notation to fix the value of notes, and their relation to one another. No signatures to regulate the key. All these were by degrees added until the modern system was established in about the fifteenth century, with all its mystery of complication, and yet, when properly understood, with all the majesty of simplicity.

Many attempts have been made to introduce changes with the view of improving the present mode, but, like the phonetic system for language, however good in theory, they all fail when brought to a practical test.

In order to carry out my view, that music has been practised at an early period in this country, I will merely state that musical exhibitions have taken place even in the fourteenth century. Interludes were played in Richard II.'s time before the king, queen, and nobles at Clerk's Well, or Clerkenwell. In Henry IV.'s time there were performances with music at Skinner's Well; and, "according to Hall's Chronicle, the first masque performed in England was at Greenwich in 1512, after the manner of Italie;"* and Holinshed says that there was not only a masque, but a comedy of Plautus performed in 1520. In 1530 a masque was performed at Whitehall, consisting of music, dancing, and a banquet, with a display of grotesque personages and fantastic dresses.

If we take the sixteenth century as the standpoint of the art, the English showed quite as

* "Anecdotes of Music," vol. ii. p. 100.

much musical knowledge and skill as any continental nation whatever—not excepting even Italy, for the glees and madrigals of English composers of that period were quite equal to any even of the boasted Italian school. In the following century, while music was being patronized and encouraged on the Continent, the monarchs all vying with each other in upholding it, England was in the throes of a revolution based upon religious principles which refused to acknowledge any art, and looked especially upon music as an offspring of his satanic majesty, and denounced all psalmody as “curious singing.” England, at this time internally convulsed, having brought her Sovereign to the scaffold, and upon the ruins of the monarchy established a religious despotism, had no time nor opportunity for the study of softening influences. All was stern, nay harsh reality, until with the Restoration a new era dawned, and music was again brought out from its seclusion, and produced a Purcell, whose genius would alone have redeemed the nation from the misnomer of not being musical. In the following century music flourished, and if we did not breed a Handel, he was nourished upon

English soil, and his music is considered to be the standard for musical composition to this day : and bringing down this brief review to the present time, no one, I think, would now be found who would pronounce the non-musical dictum.

It has always seemed to me strange that this country should be so spoken of ; for it must be quite clear that if the germ of the art did not exist it could not have been brought out as it has been ; it must have been broadcast among the people, or it could not have germinated ; but on referring to the past, are there no special proofs of musical aptitude among us ? Where is there to be found on the Continent, music that can compare with our old ballads ? Are not the Welsh musical, whose skill on the harp attested their musical powers at a very early date ? Have the Scotch no national melodies ? Are the Irish without a national air ? And are the English without music, who, if they had nothing to boast of but their National Anthem, would in that, have claim to what even the Italians do not possess to this very day ; for it was the complaint of Garibaldi, on his invasion of the southern part of the Italian Peninsula, that while the English had a

national air which, on occasions, would excite their enthusiasm to the utmost, the Italians had not a note they could call their own. And of the power of our national melody to excite sensation, even among those who cannot appreciate the European standard of music, let the following anecdote attest, which is given by Miss Wynne, in her "Diaries of a Lady of Quality." "I heard the other day from Miss Stables a singular instance of the power of music, which I am anxious to remember, because it is so well authenticated. When her father was a very young man he followed his regiment to the East Indies. Upon some occasion—I forget what—this regiment gave a dinner to that savage tyrant Hyder Ally. During dinner the regimental band played, and at last played God save the King. Hyder Ally appeared much struck, and fainted at last from emotion. Mr. Stables was one of those who assisted in removing him from the dining-room, and who, standing by when he recovered, heard him exclaim, 'Is your king a god that you adore him with such music as that!'" It is not my wish in any way to detract from the great musical power displayed by

the Italians, Germans, or French ; my object is only to vindicate my own country from the taunt so readily and persistently thrown out, that we are not a musical nation. I maintain that we have every proof to the contrary, and especially by our possession of such splendid examples of national melodies ; and that year by year this truth will be made more manifest by the increasing power and skill displayed by English composers and performers.






CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

NOW bring this work to a close. The subject has much occupied my thoughts during my career of sport, to which I may say I was early bred, and has led me to look to the reason why there is such a marked difference of character between the people of England and the people of the Continent. The influence of race will not altogether settle the point, for the elements of race are somewhat similarly distributed over other portions of Europe, yet neither the Saxon nor the Celt, out of these islands, is tinged with the same sporting propensity, and hence I came to the conclusion that this love of all manly sports and pursuits was peculiar to the English, and was the

cause of this divergence. This love of sport seems to connect itself with the love of freedom, and carrying out this view to its just consequence, it appeared to me that the two qualities always went *pari passu*. Looking from this point to the nations of antiquity, I felt confirmed in my views, and on bringing the condition of the nations of the Continent to the test, my conviction was strengthened that where there is a love of sport there will be found the love of freedom; and the converse holds good, that where there is an innate love of freedom, there will be found also the love of sport. It was this that brought the Greek out in relief from the surrounding nations. It was this that sustained the Roman in his conquests. But the liberty of the Greek was selfish; he could boast of his own freedom while trampling upon the crouching slave of his own household. The Roman could talk loudly of his liberty, while feasting with brutal joy upon the mutual butchery of his victims. The ancient Greek lives no more. The Roman has ceased to sway the world. A reign of darkness came over the continent of Europe, and as after a time the several states emerged

from the chaos of the lost Roman world, the rulers became despots and the people slaves, while both gave way before the spiritual domineering of the Papal power. It remained for the Anglo-Saxon alone to inaugurate a new and real law of liberty. The transcendant genius of the Greek has left a splendid monument of mind for all to behold and admire. The Roman has left his laws as a model for every succeeding age. The Anglo-Saxon will leave his proud monument of freedom. He is free himself, and he throws his mantle over all that seek his shores in their need. These islands are the refuge of every unfortunate victim of despotic rule, a safe asylum from imperial vengeance. This is the only country that would make any sacrifice in upholding the principle of liberty. What would now be the condition of Europe, of the whole world I may say, if the spirit of freedom did not exist in these realms? It is not too much to affirm that all mankind would have been in a state of bondage. A despot would have ruled on every throne. The Papal power would have trampled under foot every aspiration for religious liberty. Not one



spot on the globe could have given even a temporary shelter to the trembling serf from the pursuing vengeance of unbridled power and ungoverned passion. Every attempt to raise the standard of knowledge would have been brought within the pale of that unholy institution, the Inquisition ; and the very name of freedom would have been blotted out of human existence.

In the various sports which have been described in this work, my object has been to show to what an extent the love of it exists in this country. It seems indigenous to the soil. It could not have sprung up and extended, but for the real feeling for it which is found among all the people. The Englishman's life often is one of labour, but his first impulse when free is to join in some sport. I am merely describing the islander as he may be found at this day. See the stripling now wearily conning over his lesson, the next hour all life and animation at the rough sport of some game ! See the citizen one day toiling at the drudgery of the desk, the next finds him at the covert's side ready for his career not unmixed with danger ; or with gun in hand, and accompanied by his

faithful dog, pursuing his winged victims. There are those who seek their sport upon the unruly waves of the ocean, now braving the danger of the storm, now idly enjoying the shelter of some safe harbour. Why do the boats' crews submit to toil and discipline? 'Tis but to gain their hard-won victory. Nor does the fair sex keep aloof from their share of sport. The hunting field shows many a daring rider with well-fitted habit, haply leading the way where few would care to follow. And bold Robin Hood might find many a damosel who could send a gray-goose shaft with a force that might have even tried Maid Marian's skill. Such are the people of England, and they stand alone.

Some no doubt will canvas this view, and think that too much importance has been attached to manly sports and pursuits, but I think that I have only put forward what will be found to tally with the simple facts. Take the English as they are: look back to the past career of the country, and the conclusion seems inevitable, that sport is the Englishman's birthright, Freedom his Law of Nature.

I now leave this work to its fate ; and, if I have erred, it may be in having estimated too highly the English character. This, however, only entails upon us, as a nation, the greater amount of responsibility in forming our judgment of, and in the dealing with, the acts and failings of others.









